J. E. HORAN
NO.....

LYOF N. TOLSTOÏ

XI

THE COSSACKS

SEVASTOPOL

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THE NOVELS AND OTHER WORKS OF

LYOF N. TOLSTOÏ

THE COSSACKS

SEVASTOPOL

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INTRODUCTION

"THE COSSACKS" and the three Sevastopol sketches which were published in the early fifties were the direct outcome of Count Tolstoï's own experience. After he had quitted the University of Kazan and had lived some months in retirement on his estate at Yasnaya Polyana, his favorite brother, Nikolaï Nikolayevitch, who was a captain in the artillery serving at one of the outposts of the Caucasus, returned to Russia in 1851 on a furlough, and when he went back Count Lyof Nikolayevitch accompanied him and enlisted as a yunker. For two years he entered heartily into the strenuous life of that mountain frontier, became friendly with the Chechen tribesmen, engaged in wood-cutting expeditions, hunted and fought and gambled and wrote; for even then the passion for literary expression was on him. Among the earliest of his published works was that entitled "Kazaki" or "The Cossacks": it bears the date 1852.

Turgenief called "The Cossacks" the best novel in Russian, and declared that it gave "an incomparable picture of men and things in the Caucasus."

Interesting as it is from a picturesque standpoint, full as it is of the atmosphere and spirit of that "Olympus of Russian Poetry," it is also interesting as betraying the first intimations of the author's altruism. He pictures Olyenin, who is the count himself, in the halcyon days of his youth and strength, coming from the empty, dissipated life of the capital to the region of noble snow-capped mountains, of fierce, independent men and women, children of the wild, untamed nature which is such a revelation to the *blasé* man of the world. He has a conscience, a sense of right and wrong, a desire to

be generous and unselfish, and these qualities unite to form a moral timidity which the rough Cossacks despise and ridicule. It is contrasted all the time with that superb beauty, Mariana, who has no deep-seated objection to be wooed and won even for a temporary connection by a strong, passionate young officer; with the vigorous, keen Lukashka, who distrusts his friendship; with the giant hunter and drunkard Uncle Yeroshka, who thinks him only a fool for his scruples; and, lastly, with the merry-headed young Prince Byeletsky, who believes in taking all the good the gods may give, and thus in a week's time becomes hail fellow well met with every one in the stanitsa.

These primitive passions are portrayed on what the French would call a grandiose stage with the mountains and primeval forests for background, and the episodes — as, for instance, the scene where Lukashka shoots the Chechenets who is attempting to cross the Terek, or that where the mountaineers come from the aul to redeem the body, or that where they attempt to avenge the death of their khan — are described with masterly simplicity and vividness.

It is Count Tolstoï himself who lies down in the lair of the old stag, and, while enduring like a martyr the stings of the myriads of gnats which light on him, comes to the conclusion that his hitherto unsatisfied craving for happiness can be realized only by living for others. It is the same man who later renounces all personal property, and becomes a Christian Socialist.

In March, 1854, England and France declared war on Russia, and on the 14th of September the allies landed in the Crimea. Count Tolstoï at his own request had been transferred to the staff of his uncle, Prince Gorchakof, and had served in the Danubian principalities and had taken part in the retreat of the Russian army to Yassy. He was now sent to Sevastopol and served with a field battery through the winter campaign till May, 1855, when he was promoted as divisional commander. He was present at the battle of the Chernaya, and the storming of Sevastopol, refusing to take advantage of

his relationship with the commander-in-chief to escape arduous service. He was sent to Petersburg with despatches, and when he left the army at the end of the campaign he was a lieutenant of artillery. His three sketches, "Sevastopol in December, 1854," "In May, 1855," and "In August, 1855," were published separately in the *Sovremennik*, or *Contemporary*, and in book form in 1856. They instantly established the young author's reputation. They were criticized as being fragmentary and formless. But in spite of criticism the power and purpose of the writer were instantly recognized and understood. His mission was to tell the truth about war; to show forth the heroism of the common soldier who uncomplainingly went forth to death, and mutilation, and suffering, while the officer who sent him forth was more concerned with the tying of his cravat or the winning of a decoration than for the country he was paid to serve.

Count Tolstoï could never be a romanticist after that experience; it has been well said that "it finally determined the line of his after development; it gave him an abiding horror of war, an abiding suspicion of thoughtless patriotism, a sheaf of ghastly memories of butchery and death."

As in all Russian books, there is no attempt to preach or draw deductions. The grim reality is presented, and the reader may make what application he pleases. But out of "Dead Souls" and "A Sportsman's Recollections" comes the education that leads to the emancipation of the serfs, and out of the "Sevastopol Sketches," and the awful pictures of war which Tolstoï's pupil Garshin paints, — one may add, out of the realistic paintings of Vereshchagin, — will rise a spirit which shall make the nations refuse to fight, and war, like slavery, shall end.

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THE COSSACKS

CHAPTER I

ALL has become silent in Moscow.

Only now and then is heard the creaking of wheels over the wintry pavement. There are now no lights in the windows and the street lamps have gone out.

From the churches the sounds of bells are borne abroad, and, as they go swelling over the slumbering city, they bring promise of the morning.

The streets are deserted. Occasionally a night cab plows its way on narrow runners through the sand and snow, and the driver, drawing up at the next corner, drops into a doze as he waits for a fare.

An old woman passes into a church, where the wax tapers, unsymmetrically disposed, burn, casting ruddy reflections here and there on the golden background of the holy pictures.

The working-people, after the long winter's night, are already up and off to their labors.

But for men of fashion it is still "the evening."

At Chevalier's a light, contrary to the police ordinance, is shining under the closed shutters of one of the windows. A carriage and a sledge are drawn up at the entrance; the drivers huddle together with their backs to the wall. A three-span from the post-station also stands there. The well-muffled doorkeeper crouches down behind the corner of the house, as if he were trying to hide.

"Why don't they finish threshing their chaff," wonders a sleepy-faced lackey sitting in the anteroom. "And it keeps me on duty all the time!"

From the small, brightly lighted room adjoining are heard the voices of three young men at supper. They are sitting at a table on which stand empty bottles, wine-glasses, and the remains of their banquet.

One of them — a small, lean, homely man, neatly dressed — sits looking with affectionate, weary eyes at the one who is evidently bound on a journey.

The second — a tall man — reclines near the table, and is toying with his watch-key.

The third, in a rather new, short fur cloak, is striding up and down the room, occasionally pausing to crack an almond between his rather plump, muscular, and carefully tended fingers. He keeps smiling; his eyes and his face are aglow. He is talking with animation, and with frequent gestures, but it is evident that words fail him, and all the words that come to him are insufficient to express the thoughts that fill his heart. He smiles constantly.

"The whole thing can be told now!" he exclaims. "I don't pretend to justify myself, but I should like to have you, at least, understand me in the same way as I understand myself, and not as the vulgar herd look on this affair. You say that I am to blame toward her," he adds, addressing the one who is looking at him with affectionate eyes.

"Yes, you are to blame," replies the little, homely man, and it seems as if his eyes expressed more weariness and affection than ever.

"I know why you say so," continued the other. "The happiness of being loved, according to your notion, is precisely the same as of being in love, and is sufficient to fill one's whole life, if one only chance to meet with it."

"Indeed, it is quite sufficient, dear heart. It is more than a necessity," insists the homely little man, blinking his eyes.

"But why should not a man be able to reciprocate such love?" suggests the other, in a musing tone, and looking at his friend with a sort of compassion. "Why not love in return? It is not a question of will. No! to

be loved is a misfortune, a misfortune, when you are conscious that you are guilty of not giving what is beyond your power to give. Oh, my God!" — He made an abrupt gesture with his hand. "You see, if all this happened according to reason, — but everything is at sixes and sevens, as it all took place not as we would have it, but arbitrarily — it looks exactly as if I had stolen this lady's love! Even you think so; don't deny it; you cannot help thinking so. But would you believe that, of the many foolish and detestable things which I have succeeded in doing in my life, this is one which I do not regret and which I cannot regret. Neither first nor last have I been false to myself or to her. At one time I thought that at last I was going to fall in love, but I soon came to see that this was a mistake for which I was not responsible, and that men do not love in any such way, and that I must stop where I was..... But she went farther. Now, how was I to blame for my inability? What was left for me to do?"

"Well, it is all over now," said his friend, puffing at his cigar so as to keep awake. "Only there 's one thing: you have never yet been in love, and you don't know what it means to love."

The young man in the fur cloak had the impulse to say something more, and clasped his head with his hands. But he refrained from saying what he had in his mind to say.

"Never been in love? Yes, you are right, I have never been in love. And yet I have the desire to love, and it is stronger than any other desire. And then, again, is any such love possible? There is always something incomplete and unsatisfactory about it. But what is the use of talking? All my life long I have muddled things, — muddled things! But now that is all over, as you say. And I have a consciousness that a new life is opening for me."

"You will make a muddle of it just the same," said the tall man, who was lying on the divan and toying with his watch-key; but the traveler did not hear what he said.

"I feel both sad and glad at the thought of going," he went on to say. "Why sad? I am sure I don't know."

And the young man proceeded to talk about himself, to the exclusion of everything else, not noticing that this was not as interesting to his companions as it was to himself.

A man is never so much of an egotist as at the moment when his whole being is stirred with spiritual exaltation. It seems to him that there is nothing in the world more beautiful, more interesting, than himself at such a moment.

"Dmitri Andreyevitch, the postilion won't wait any longer," said a young body-servant in a sheepskin shuba, and muffled up in a scarf, coming in at this moment. "The horses were ready at twelve, and now it is four."

Dmitri Andreyevitch looked at his Vanyusha. In the folds of his scarf, in his felt boots, in his sleepy face, he seemed to hear the voice of a new life summoning him — a life of toil, privation, activity.

"Well, this time it is farewell in earnest," he said, trying to fasten a neglected loop.

Paying no heed to the suggestion to give an extra fee to the impatient postilion, he put on his cap, and paused in the middle of the room.

The young men kissed each other once, and again; paused, and then exchanged still a third kiss. The one who wore the short fur cloak went to the table, drained a champagne-glass, seized the homely little man by the hand, and a flush spread over his face.

"It is no use, I will tell you.... I must be frank toward you, and I can be, because I am your friend..... You love her, do you not? I always thought so.... am I not right?"

"Yes," assented his friend, with a still more affectionate smile.

"And possibly...."

"If you please, I am ordered to put out the candles," said the sleepy servant, who had been listening to the last part of the conversation, and was wondering why

these gentlemen confined themselves to one and the same subject. "To whom shall this account be charged? To you?" he added, addressing the tall young man, as if knowing beforehand with whom he had to deal.

"Yes," replied the tall man; "how much is it?"

"Twenty-six rubles."

The tall man pondered for a moment, but made no objection, and stuffed the score into his pocket.

Meantime the other two kept on with their own affairs.

"Farewell, my dear old fellow," said the homely little gentleman, with the affectionate eyes.

The tears started to the eyes of both of them. They came out on the porch.

"Oh! see here," exclaimed the traveler, reddening, and turning to the tall young man. "You settle the account with Chevalier, and then let me know."

"All right, all right," replied the other, drawing on his gloves, and then, as they stood on the steps, he added most unexpectedly, "How I envy you!"

The traveler had taken his seat in the sledge, and wrapped himself up in his furs; and he said, "Well, then, come along with me," and even moved along in the sledge, so as to make room for the one who had expressed his envy. His voice trembled.

But the other replied, "Good-by, Mitya; God grant you...."

He had no other wish for him except that he should start as soon as possible, and so he could not say what he wished!

They were all silent. Then one of them said, "Farewell — *prashchaï!*" A voice rang out, "Go on — *pashol!*" And the postilion started up his horses.

"Yelizar, bring up my team," cried one of the friends left behind. The cab-drivers and coachman started up, clucked, and twitched on their reins. The frozen wheels creaked over the snow.

"Splendid young fellow, that Olyenin!" exclaimed one of the friends. "But what an odd freak to go off

to the Caucasus, and as a *yunker*[1] too! I would n't do it for a half-ruble! Are you going to dine at the club to-morrow?"

"I am."

And the friends separated.

His furs seemed warm, even hot, to the traveler. He sat on the bottom of the sledge and threw back his furs, and the hired troïka, with their bristling manes, dashed from one dark street into another, past houses which he had never seen before. It seemed to Olyenin that only those bound on long journeys ever rode through these streets.

All about was dark, silent, and melancholy, and his soul was so full of recollections, of love, of regrets, and of pleasant, oppressive tears.....

CHAPTER II

"I AM in love! Very much in love! Splendid fellows! It is good!" He repeated these words over and over, and felt like shedding tears.

But why should he shed tears? who were splendid fellows? with whom was he very much in love? He had not a very clear idea.

From time to time he cast a fleeting glance at some house, and wondered why it was built in such a strange way; and then again he wondered why the postilion and Vanyusha, who were such complete strangers to him, were riding so near to him, and swaying and jolting, just as he himself did, as the outside horses twitched on the frozen traces. And once more he exclaimed: —

"Splendid fellows! I am in love!" and this time he added: "How well that suits! Admirable!"

And now he began to wonder for what purpose he had said that, and he asked himself: "It can't be that I am drunk, can it?"

[1] A *yunker* (German, *Junker*) is a young man of noble family attached to the army as non-commissioned officer. Count Tolstoï himself passed his examination at Tiflis and became a yunker in 1851.

The fact was Olyenin had taken two whole bottles of wine, but it was not the wine alone which had produced this effect on him. He recalled all the apparently cordial words of friendship which were shyly, perhaps even unexpectedly, said to him, before his departure. He recalled the warm pressure of hands, the glances, the moments of silence, the tone of voice in which his friend had said, "Farewell — *prashchaï*, Mitya," after he had taken his seat in the sledge. He recalled his own resolute frankness.

And all this had a softening influence on him. Before his departure, not only his friends and his relatives, not only those who were indifferent to him, but also uncongenial, unfriendly people, without exception, as it were with one consent, had seemed to manifest a sudden affection for him, and bid him farewell as if he were going to the confessional or to death.

"It may be I shall never return from the Caucasus," he said to himself. And it seemed to him that he loved his friends and some one else besides. And a feeling of self-pity came over him.

But it was not love for his friends which so softened and elevated his soul that he could not keep back the thoughtless words that spoke themselves — nor was it love for any woman — for he had never, as yet, been in love — which brought him into this state of mind.

It was love for himself; it was glowing, hopeful, young love toward everything that was good in his heart — and now it seemed to him that there was nothing but good there — which caused him to weep and to mutter disconnected words.

Olyenin was a young man who had not finished his university course, who had never been in active service, — having merely had his name registered in some government office, — who had squandered half of his patrimony, and who, though he was now twenty-four years old, had never chosen any career, and had never done anything. He was what is called a "young man" in Moscow society.

Since his eighteenth year Olyenin had been as free

as was possible only for the rich young men of Russia during "the forties," especially when they had lost their parents in childhood. He had not been troubled by any kind of fetters, either physical or moral. He could do whatever he pleased; he had no need of anything whatever; he recognized no claims upon him. He had no family or country or religion or wants. He believed in nothing and acknowledged nothing. But though he acknowledged nothing, not only was he not a gloomy, life-weary, logical young man, but, on the contrary, he was forever being carried away by impulses. He would argue that love did not exist, and the mere presence of a handsome young woman made him thrill.

He had been long convinced that rank and honors were absurdities, yet he could not help feeling gratified when, at the ball, Prince Sergi came over to him and made flattering remarks.

But, though he gave all his impulses free rein, yet they did not control him. In any case when he had taken up some new enthusiasm, as soon as he began to suspect that toil and strife, — the petty struggles of life, — were at hand, he instinctively made haste to get rid of the feeling or affair, and to regain his freedom.

In this way he had begun to devote himself to a life of pleasure, to service of his country, to overseeing his estate, to music, which he had at one time seriously thought of adopting as his profession, and even to love toward women, in which he had no belief.

He had been in a quandary as to the question where — whether in art or in science, in love or in practical activity — it was best for him to exercise all the youthful energy which a man possesses only once in his life, not the energy of intellect, of heart, of imagination, but rather the fresh spontaneity which, when once lost, can never return, the virtue only once given to a man, to make himself whatever he wishes or seems best to him, and to make of the whole world all that his heart desires.

It is true, there are men lacking this potency, and

these, entering life, accept the first harness that is put on them, and work soberly in it to the end of their days. But Olyenin was too powerfully conscious in himself of the presence of this omnipotent divinity of youth, this capacity of being absorbed in one desire, in one thought, the capacity of willing and of doing, to throw himself head first into any bottomless abyss without knowing why or wherefore. He carried with him this consciousness, was proud of it, and, without himself knowing it, was made happy by it. Hitherto the only object of his affection had been himself, and this was inevitable because he expected from himself nothing but what was good, and he had not as yet lost his illusions about himself.

Now that he was taking his departure from Moscow, he found himself in that happy youthful frame of mind in which, recognizing the mistakes that he has made, a young man suddenly confesses that all this was wrong — that all his previous actions have been undirected and meaningless, that hitherto he has not even had the desire to live rightly, — but that now, as he leaves Moscow, a new life is beginning, in which there will be none of his old mistakes, his old regrets, and beyond a peradventure only happiness.

It always happens, when you take a long journey, that, even after the horses have been changed two or three times, the imagination lags behind in the very place whence you started, and then suddenly, on the first morning that finds you on the road, leaps forward to the goal and there begins to build the air-castles of the future. This was what happened to Olyenin.

As soon as he was beyond the city limits and saw the snow-covered fields, he rejoiced that he was alone in the midst of these fields; he wrapped his fur shuba around him, stretched himself out comfortably in the bottom of the sledge, and dozed. The parting with his friends had stirred him deeply, and his mind began to call up all the events of the past winter which he had spent in Moscow; — pictures of what had happened, mingled with confused thoughts and regrets, began to throng through his imagination.

He remembered the friend from whom he had taken leave, and his relations to the young girl of whom they had been speaking. This young girl was rich.

"How was it possible for him to love her when he knew that she loved me?" he asked himself, and evil suspicions arose in his mind. "There is such a lack of honor in men when you stop to think! But why have I never yet really fallen in love?"

The question presented itself fairly before him. "They all tell me that I have never been in love. Can it be that I am a moral monster?"

And he began to recall his attachments. He recalled his first experience in social life, and the sister of one of his friends, with whom he used to spend whole evenings at the table, near the lamp, which cast its light on her slender fingers, busied with her work, and on the lower part of her pretty, delicate face; and he remembered their conversations, as interminable as the game of "Fox,"[1] and his general sense of awkwardness and constraint, and his constant sense of effort to overcome this diffidence. But a voice kept whispering in his ear, "Not this one, not this one," and indeed it had proved to be not *this one.*

Then he recalled a ball, and how he danced the mazurka with the beautiful D——.

"How deeply in love I was that evening, and how happy! And what a sense of pain and vexation came over me the next morning when I awoke and realized that I was still free! Why is it that love has eluded me? Why has she not held me captive hand and foot?" he asked himself. "No! there is no such thing as love! Our young neighbor, who used to tell me and Dubrovin and the marshal that she loved the stars, — she also was not *the one.*"

And then he recalls his experiment in managing his estate in the country, and again finds no cause for self-congratulation. The question comes into his mind: "Will 'they' have much to say about my departure?" but who are *they* he himself has no clear idea, and this

[1] "*Zhif-zhif kurilka,*" "The fox is alive."

thought is followed by another, which makes him frown and utter inarticulate sounds; it is the recollection of his tailor, M. Capel, and the unpaid account of six hundred and seventy-eight rubles; he even recalls the words that he had used in urging the tailor to wait another year, and the expression of perplexity and submission to fate that came into the tailor's face.

"Oh! my God! my God!" he exclaims again and again, winking his eyes and trying to banish the unwelcome thought. "And yet she loved me in spite of all that," he says, thinking of the young girl of whom they had been speaking that evening. "Yes, if I had married her, I should have got out of debt, and now Vasilyef holds my note of hand."

He passes in review the last evening that he had played cards with Mr. Vasilyef at the club, where he went directly after leaving her house, and he remembers his humiliating entreaties to be allowed to play one more hand, and his opponent's haughty refusal.

"A year of economy and I shall clear it all off, and.... the devil take 'em." ....

But, in spite of this assurance, he begins once more to calculate his debts, the periods that they have to run, and the possible time for their redemption.

"Let me see! I have an account at Morel's, as well as at Chevalier's." And he recalls that whole night in which he had run up such an account. It was for a carouse with the gipsies, which had been arranged in honor of visitors from Petersburg, — Sashka B——, one of the emperor's staff, and Prince D——, and a certain elderly gentleman of some note.

"I wonder why it was that those men were so self-satisfied, and what ground they have for the formation of that select circle, admission to which, in their opinion, is such an honor. Is it because they are attached to the emperor's staff? Why! it is terrible the way they look down on other men, as blockheads and boors! I made it evident to them that I had no wish to become one of them. Nevertheless, Andreï, my overseer, I suppose, would have been mightily impressed at seeing

me on such intimate terms with gentlemen like Sashka B——, colonel and aide to the emperor. .... And, besides, no one drank more than I did that evening; I taught the gipsies a new song, and they all listened. Supposing I have done all sorts of foolish things, still I am at heart a very, very worthy young man."

This was his honest conviction.

Morning found Olyenin at the third post-station. He drank his tea, helped Vanyusha rearrange his parcels and trunks, and then took his place in the sledge in accordance with all reason, good order, and comfort, knowing where his belongings were disposed, — his money, and how much he had, and his passport and his order for post-horses and his highway receipt, — and all this seemed to him to have been done in such a practical way that it filled his heart with joy, and the long journey assumed the aspect of a protracted pleasure excursion.

During the morning and the middle of the day he was busy with arithmetical calculations: how many versts he had already gone; how far it was to the next post-station, to the next city; how much distance he should accomplish before dinner, before tea; how far it was to Stavropol; and what proportion of the whole journey was represented by the part already accomplished.

Then he also calculated how much money he had, how much he had spent, how much was needed to settle all his debts, and what portion of his whole income he should be obliged to disburse each month.

In the evening, while drinking his tea, he made the calculation that he was seven-elevenths of the whole distance from Moscow to Stavropol, and that his debts demanded seven months of close economy, and one-eighth of all his fortune, — and, having thus satisfied his mind, he wrapped himself up, stretched himself out in the sledge, and once more fell into a doze.

His imagination now was occupied with the future in the Caucasus. All his dreams of the future were woven with visions of Amalat-beks, Circassian maids, mountains, chasms, tremendous torrents, and perils. All this

presented itself hazily, dimly; but glory, alluring, and death, threatening, constituted the interest of this future. Now he imagined himself, with unheard-of bravery and amazing prowess, killing and conquering a countless multitude of mountaineers; now that he himself was a mountaineer, taking sides with his countrymen to defend his independence against the Russians.

As soon, however, as he began to fill out the picture with details, then his old Moscow acquaintances made their appearance. Sashka B—— seemed to be there, fighting against him with the Russians or the mountaineers. In some inexplicable way even his tailor, M. Capel, takes part in the triumphs of the victor. If, meantime, he recalls his old humiliations, weaknesses, errors, still the recollection has its pleasant side. It is clear that there, amid the mountains, Circassian maids, and perils, such errors cannot be repeated. He has once for all made confession of them before the shrine of his own soul, and they are done with forever.

There is one other very precious vision which mingles with every one of the young man's thoughts of the future.

This dream is about a woman.

And now she presents herself to his imagination in the guise of a Circassian slave among the mountains, a maiden of graceful form, with long braids of hair and deep, submissive eyes. He beholds the lonely hut among the mountains, and at the door *she* stands waiting and watching for him to return to her, weary, covered with dust, with blood, with glory; and he marvels at her kisses, her shoulders, her witching voice, her submissiveness. She is lovely but uncultivated, wild, and rough. During the long winter evenings he begins to educate her. She is clever, receptive, gifted, and quickly adapts herself to all the indispensable requirements of knowledge. Why should it not be so? She has great capacity for acquiring a new language, for reading the masterpieces of French literature and understanding them. "Notre Dame de Paris," for example, will surely be a delight to her. She will even be able

to speak French, and in the drawing-room she will be able to show more natural dignity than any lady of the highest society. She can sing too — simply, powerfully, passionately.

"Ah, what rubbish!" he said to himself, and just then they arrived at some post-station, and he was obliged to transfer his luggage from one sledge to another and give the men vodka money. But once more his mind was filled with the same imaginations which he had just called rubbish, and again he seemed to see the Circassian maids, himself returning to Russia crowned with glory, becoming the emperor's aide, winning a lovely wife!

"But there! I don't believe that there is such a thing as love," he said to himself, "and honors are rubbish. .... And how about that six hundred and seventy-eight rubles? .... But will not a conquered province put more wealth into my hands than I shall need for my whole life? .... Besides, it will not be right to make use of such wealth for myself alone. I shall have to share it. .... But with whom? .... Six hundred and seventy-eight rubles to Capel, and then we can see about the rest." ....

And now his thought becomes entirely confused with disconnected visions, and only Vanyusha's voice and the consciousness of arrested motion disturb his healthy young sleep, and in a daze he crawls into a fresh sledge at another station, and thus his journey proceeds.

The next morning the same thing takes place — the same post-stations, the same tea, the same horses with their energetic motions, the same brief colloquies with Vanyusha, the same indefinite visions as the day closes, and the same healthy young sleep of fatigue through the night.

CHAPTER III

The farther Olyenin traveled from the center of Russia, the more distant all his recollection seemed; the nearer he came to the Caucasus, the more light-hearted he grew. The idea of going away entirely, of

never returning, of never again appearing in society, kept recurring to his mind.

"Now, these men whom I see here are *not people*, not one of them knows me and not one of them can have ever been in the same society in Moscow in which I moved, or knows about my past. And no one in that society will know what I have been doing while living among those people."

A wholly new sense of freedom from all his past life came over him, as he found himself amid all the coarse beings whom he encountered on the way and whom he could not call *people* in the same sense as his old acquaintances in Moscow. The rougher they were, the less they were marked by the characteristics of civilized life, the greater became his sense of freedom.

Stavropol, through which he was forced to pass, vexed his spirit. The sign-boards,—even sign-boards in French, — the ladies in calashes, the hacks drawn up along the square, the boulevards, a gentleman in cloak and cap, who was promenading along the boulevard and staring at the passers-by, — all had an unpleasant effect upon him.

"Maybe these people know some of my acquaintances." And again he recalls the club, the tailor, the cards, gay society. ....

After he had left Stavropol behind him, he began, already, to feel in a better frame of mind; it became wild, and, what was better than all, picturesque and warlike. And Olyenin's heart grew lighter and lighter. All the Cossacks, the postilions, the station-keepers, seemed to him artless beings with whom one could artlessly jest or converse, without any thought of making class distinctions. They all belonged to the human race, which Olyenin loved without knowing it, and they all showed a friendly disposition toward him.

Even before they passed out of the country of the Don Cossacks, the sledge was exchanged for a wheeled vehicle, and beyond Stavropol it became so warm that Olyenin went without his shuba.

It was already spring, a spring which for Olyenin was a joyful surprise.

At night they were not allowed to leave the station-houses, and at evening they said there was danger. Vanyusha began to be a little alarmed; a loaded musket lay on the post-carriage. This made Olyenin still more light-hearted. At one station the superintendent told of a murder which had recently occurred on the high-way. They began to meet with men carrying weapons.

"Now, this is the beginning," said Olyenin, and he kept expecting the view of the snow-capped mountains of which many had spoken to him.

One time, toward evening, the Nogaï postilion pointed with his whip to mountains appearing above the clouds. Olyenin tried eagerly to strain his sight, but it was growing dark and clouds half concealed the mountains. It seemed to Olyenin that there was something gray, white, and curly, and in spite of all his endeavor he could not distinguish anything beautiful in the aspect of the mountains of which he had read and heard so much.

It seemed to him that the mountains and the clouds were absolutely alike, and that the peculiar beauty of the snow-capped mountains, about which he had been told, was as much a figment of the imagination as the music of Bach, or *love* for a woman, in which he had no belief, and so he ceased to expect anything from the mountains.

But the next day, early in the morning, he was waked up by the coolness in his post-carriage, and looked out indifferently toward the right. The morning was perfectly clear.

Suddenly he saw, twenty paces distant from him, as it seemed at the first moment, the pure white mountain masses, with their tender outlines, and the fantastic, marvelous, perfect aërial contours of their summits and the far-off sky.

And when he comprehended all the distance between him and the mountains and the sky, all the majesty of the mountains, and when he realized all the endlessness of that beauty, he was alarmed lest it were an illusion, a dream. He shook himself so as to wake up.

But the mountains were still the same.

"What is that? Tell me what that is!" he asked of the postilion.

"Oh! the mountains!" replied the Nogayets, indifferently.

"And so I have been looking at them for a long time! are n't they splendid! They won't believe me at home!" said Vanyusha.

As the three-span flew swiftly over the level road, it seemed as if the mountains ran along the horizon, shining in the sunrise with their rosy summits.

At first the mountains only surprised Olyenin, then they delighted him; but afterwards, as he gazed at this ever increasing, constantly changing, chain of snow-capped mountains, not piled upon other, dark mountains, but rising straight out of the steppe, little by little he began to get into the spirit of their beauty, and he *felt* the mountains.

From that moment all that he had seen, all that he had thought, all that he had felt, assumed for him the new, sternly majestic character of the mountains. All his recollections of Moscow, his shame and his repentance, all his former illusions about the Caucasus, — all disappeared and never returned again.

"Now life begins," seemed to be sounded into his ear by some solemn voice. And the road, the distant outline of the Terek, now coming into sight, and the post-stations, and the people, — all seemed to him no longer insignificant.

He looks at the sky and remembers the mountains, he looks at himself, at Vanyusha, and again at the mountains!

Here two Cossacks appear on horseback, their muskets balanced over their backs, and rhythmically swinging as their horses gallop along with brown and gray legs intermingling; but the mountains!....

Beyond the Terek, smoke seems to be rising from some *aul*, or native village; but the mountains!....

The sun stands high and gleams on the river winding among the reeds; but the mountains!....

From a Cossack station comes an *arba*, or native cart — pretty women are riding in it, young women; but the mountains! ....

Abreks[1] gallop across the steppe, and I am coming, I fear them not, I have weapons and strength and youth; but the mountains! ....

CHAPTER IV

The whole line of the Terek, along which, for some eighty versts, are scattered the *stanitsui*, or villages of the Grebensky Cossacks, has a distinctive character, by reason not only of its situation, but also of population.

The river Terek, which separates the Cossacks from the mountaineers, flows turbid and swift, but still in a broad and tranquil current, constantly depositing gray silt on the low, reed-grown right bank, and undermining the steep but not lofty left bank, with its tangled roots of century-old oaks, decaying plane trees, and underbrush.

On the right bank lie *auls*, or native villages, peaceable but restless; along the left bank, half a verst from the river, and seven or eight versts apart, stretch the Cossack villages. In former times, the majority of these villages or outposts were on the very edge of the river; but the Terek each year, sweeping farther away from the mountains toward the north, has kept undermining them, and now there remain in sight only the old ruins, gardens, pear trees, poplars, and limes, thickly overgrown, and twined about with blackberries and wild grape-vines. No one any longer lives there, and the only signs of life are the tracks on the sand, made by deer, wolves, hares, and pheasants, which haunt such places.

A road runs from stanitsa to stanitsa, through the forest, as a cannon-shot would fly. Along the road are the military stations or cordons, guarded by Cos-

[1] The hostile mountaineer who crosses over to the Russian side of the Terek for the purpose of theft or rapine is called *abrek*. — Author's Note.

sacks. Between the cordons are watch-towers with sentinels. Only a narrow strip of fertile forest land — say twenty-one hundred feet wide — constitutes the Cossacks' domain.

On the north begin the sandy dunes of the Nogaï, or Mozdok steppe, stretching far away, and commingling, God knows where, with the Trukhmensky, Astrakhan, and Kirgiz-Kaïsak steppes.

On the south, beyond the Terek, is the Great Chechnya, the ridge of the Kotchkalosof range, the Black Mountains, then still another sierra, and finally the snowy mountains, which are visible, indeed, but which have never yet been trodden by the foot of man.

On the fertile strip of forest land, rich in all kinds of vegetation, have lived, since immemorial times, a warlike, handsome, and wealthy Russian population, professing the "old faith," and called the *Grebensky Kazaki*, or Border Cossacks.

Very, very long ago, their ancestors, the *Starovyerui*, or "Old Believers," fled from Russia and settled beyond the Terek among the Chechens on the Ridge — Greben — or first spur of the wooded range of the Great Chechnya. These Cossacks intermarried with their new neighbors, the Chechens, and adopted the habits, mode of life, and manners of the mountaineers; but they succeeded in maintaining even there the Russian language and their old belief in their pristine purity. A tradition, still preserved among these Cossacks, declares that the Tsar Ivan the Terrible came to the Terek, invited the elders of the Cossacks from the Ridge to meet him, gave them the land on that side of the river, charged them to live in peace, and promised not to compel them either to subjection or to a change of belief.

From that time to this the Cossack families have kept up their relations with the mountaineers, and the chief traits of their character are love of liberty, laziness, brigandage, and war. The influence of Russia has been exerted only in a detrimental way, by forced conscriptions, the removal of their bells, and the presence of troops quartered among them. The Cossack is inclined

to have less detestation for the mountaineer-jigit who has killed his brother than for the soldier who is quartered on him for the sake of protecting his village, but who scents up his hut with tobacco-smoke. He respects his mountain enemy; but he disdains the soldier, whom he regards as an alien oppressor.

In the eyes of the Cossack the Russian peasant is a nondescript creature, uncouth and beneath contempt, the type of which he finds in the peripatetic Little Russian peddler or emigrant, called by the Cossacks *Shapoval*, or tile-wearer.

The height of style there is to dress like the Cherkes. His best weapons are procured from the mountaineers; from them also his best horses are bought or stolen. The young Cossack brave prides himself on his knowledge of the Tartar language, and, when he is on a drunken spree, he speaks Tartar even with his brother.

Notwithstanding this fact this petty population of Christians, barricaded in a little corner of the world, surrounded by semi-civilized Mahometan tribes and by soldiers, regards itself as having attained the highest degree of culture, looks on the Cossack as alone worthy of the name of man, and affects to despise every one else. The Cossack spends the most of his time at the cordons, in expeditions, hunting, and fishing. He almost never works at home. His presence in his stanitsa is an exception to the rule; but when he is there he *lounges*. Wine is a common commodity among all the Cossacks, and drunkenness is not so much a universal propensity as it is a rite, the non-fulfilment of which would be regarded as apostasy.

The Cossack looks on a woman as the instrument of his well-being. Only while she is unmarried does he allow her to be idle and make merry; but when she is once a wife he compels her to work for him from youth to the very end of old age. He is thoroughly Oriental in his demand on her obedience and toil.

As the result of this state of things, woman, though to all appearances in subjection, becomes powerfully developed both physically and morally, and, as is com-

monly the case in the East, possesses incomparably more influence and consequence in domestic affairs than in the West. Her seclusion from society and her inurement to hard manual labor give her still more authority and command in domestic affairs. The Cossack who, in the presence of strangers, regards it as unbecoming to talk affectionately or gossip with his wife, cannot help feeling her superiority when he is left alone with her. His whole house, his whole estate, his whole establishment, have been acquired by her, and are maintained solely by her labors and exertions. And though he is obstinately convinced that toil is degrading for a Cossack, and is the proper occupation only of a Nogaï laborer or a woman, yet he has a dim consciousness that everything that redounds to his comfort, and that he calls his own, is the result of this toil, and that it is in the power of his mother or his wife, even though he looks on her as his *serf*, to deprive him of all that makes his life agreeable.

Moreover, the constant hard field labor, and the duties intrusted to them, give a peculiarly independent, masculine character to the Greben women, and have served to develop in them, to a remarkable degree, physical powers, healthy minds, decision and stability of character. The women are for the most part stronger and more intelligent, better developed and handsomer, than the men.

The beauty of the women among the Grebensky Cossacks is due to the striking union in them of the purest type of the Circassian with the full and powerful build of the northern woman. Their usual dress is Circassian: the Tartar shirt, the *beshmet*, or under-tunic, and the foot-gear called *chuvyaki;* but they wear the kerchiefs in the Russian way. The wearing of clean, rich, and elegant attire, and the decoration of their cottages, belong to the inseparable conditions of their existence.

In their relations to the men, the women, and especially the girls, enjoy unlimited freedom. The stanitsa of Novo-Mlinsk is considered to be the mother stem of Grebensky Cossackdom. Here more than elsewhere are preserved the manners and customs of the old Gre-

bentsui, and the women of this village have always been famous throughout the Caucasus for their beauty.

The Cossacks subsist largely from the products of their vineyards and fruit gardens, their melon and gourd patches, their fishing and hunting, their fields of maize and millet, and from the spoils of war.

The stanitsa of Novo-Mlinsk stands about three versts from the Terek, separated from it by a dense forest. On one side of the road which runs through the village is a stream; on the other are green vineyards and orchards, beyond which can be seen the stretches of drifting sand, the sand dunes of the Nogaï steppe, called *burunui*.

The stanitsa is surrounded by earthworks and a thorn hedge. You leave the village and you enter it by lofty gates, hung between high posts and protected by a narrow reed-thatched roof; near each one there stands, on a wooden platform, a monstrous cannon, which has not been fired for a hundred years. It is the relic of some Cossack victory.

A Cossack in uniform, with cap and gun, is sometimes found, and sometimes not found, standing at the gates on sentinel duty; sometimes he salutes, and sometimes he forgets to salute, the officer passing by.

Under the gate roof, on a white board, is painted, in black letters: —

266 houses.
897 males.
1012 females.

The Cossacks' houses are all raised on posts two or three feet from the ground, are neatly thatched with reeds, and have high ridge-poles. The houses, without exception, even though they are not new, are neat and well cared for, and with their variegated steep gables present a comfortable and picturesque appearance as they stand in ample grounds along the wide streets and lanes.

In front of the bright, commodious windows of many of the houses, behind the fences, grow dark green poplars, delicate, bright-leaved acacias, with their fragrant white blossoms, or else the boldly flaunting yellow of the sunflower, and the twining tendrils of the peas and grape-vines.

On the wide square can be seen two or three shops with gay-colored wares, seeds, gourds, and gingerbread; and behind a high fence, through a row of ancient poplars, stands, looking down upon the rest, the house of the regimental commander, with its folding windows.

The streets, especially in summer, during working hours, are generally deserted; the Cossacks are away on duty, at the cordons, and on expeditions; the old men are off hunting or fishing, or helping the women in the gardens or orchards. Only the entirely decrepit, the children, and the sick remain at home.

CHAPTER V

It was one of those wonderful evenings such as are found only in the Caucasus. The sun had sunk behind the mountains, but it was still light. The twilight glow embraced a third of the sky, and against its brilliancy stood out in sharp contrast the pallid white masses of the mountains. The atmosphere was rare, calm, and resonant. Across the steppe for versts lay the long shadows of the mountains.

Everywhere it was deserted — on the steppe, across the river, along the roads. If now and then horseback riders made their appearance anywhere, then instantly the Cossacks from the cordons and the Chechens from the aul alike would gaze in wonder and curiosity and surmise who such suspicious-looking people might be.

At the first approach of evening, the people, in dread of one another, hasten to their dwellings, and only wild beasts or birds of prey, having no fear of men, are left to raven freely through the wilderness.

Even before the sun has set, the Cossack women,

who have been making wattles in the gardens, are on their way home, gayly talking as they hasten along; and the gardens soon become deserted, like all the rest of the region.

But the stanitsa at this hour of the day becomes extremely animated. From all sides the populace move toward the village — on foot, on horseback, and in squeaking, two-wheeled arbas. Maidens, with their skirts tucked up, and carrying fagots, come merrily chattering and hasten to the gates to meet the cattle, which throng in from the steppe, enveloped in a cloud of dust and gnats. The plump cows and buffaloes scatter through the streets, and the Cossack women, in their bright-colored beshmets, select their own from among them. Their high-pitched voices, their merry laughter and shrieks, are heard, mingled with the lowing of the cattle.

Here comes a mounted Cossack, armed, on leave of absence from the cordon; he rides up to a hut, and leaning down to the window, taps on it; immediately after appears the pretty young head of a Cossack maiden, and you hear the murmur of their gay, affectionate banter.

Yonder a ragged Nogaï laborer, with high cheek-bones, bringing reeds from the steppe, drives his squeaking arba across the clean, wide yard of his esaul, and takes off the yoke from the oxen, which shake their heads; then he exchanges some words in Tartar with his master.

In one place, almost the whole width of the street is occupied by a great puddle, which, year in and year out, obliges people to go out of their way and pass it by, laboriously clinging to the fences; along the edge of this comes a bare-legged Cossack woman, with a bundle of fagots on her back; she lifts her skirt very high above her white ankles, and a Cossack huntsman, riding by, flings his merry jest at her, "Hold it up a little higher, hussy!" and aims his gun at her; the young woman drops her skirt in her confusion, and off tumbles the bundle of fagots.

An old Cossack, with pantaloons tucked up and his gray chest bare, on his way home from his day's fishing, carries over his shoulder a *sanetka*, or net, full of silvery fish, still flapping; in order to make a shorter cut, he crawls through his neighbor's broken hedge, and, in doing so, catches his coat and tears it.

Yonder an old woman drags along a dry branch, and the blows of an ax are heard echoing around the corner. The Cossack children shout at the top of their voices, as they whip their tops wherever there is a level spot on the street. Women can be seen climbing through the hedges, so as to save extra steps. From all the chimneys rises the pungent smoke from burning cow-dung. In every yard is heard the increased bustle that precedes the silence of the night.

Dame[1] Ulitka, the wife of the Cossack ensign and school-teacher, comes out to the gate of her yard as all the rest do, and stands there waiting for her cattle, which her daughter Maryanka is driving down the street. She has barely time to open the wicket gate when a huge cow buffalo, with gnats swarming about her, rushes lowing into the yard. Behind her saunter the fat cows, seeming with their big eyes to acknowledge the dignity of their mistress, and switching their sides lazily with their tails.

Maryanka, a well-developed, beautiful girl, passes through the gate and, throwing down her stick, closes the wicket, and, with swift, energetic feet, hastens to separate and drive the cattle to their stalls.

"You devil's own girl, you 'll spoil your chuvyaki[2]; take them off instantly."

Maryanka is not in the least affronted by being called *chortova dyevka*, "the devil's own child," and regards these words as a sort of subtile flattery; she gayly goes on with her chores. Her face is enveloped in a twisted kerchief; she wears a rose-colored shirt and a green beshmet. She disappears under the shed where the plump cattle have already preceded her, and soon her

[1] *Babuka.*
[2] *Chuvyaki*, shoes. — AUTHOR'S NOTE.

voice is heard from the stall as she caressingly talks with the cow buffalo.

"Won't you stand still! — There, there, now! there, matushka."[1]

Soon after the young girl goes with her mother from the stable to the dairy,[2] both carrying two brimming crocks of milk, the product of the evening's milking. From the clay chimney of the dairy pours the dense smoke of burning dung; the milk is quickly boiled into curds.

The young girl busies herself in keeping up the fire, but the old mother goes out again to the gate. Twilight settles down over the stanitsa. The air is filled with the odor of vegetables, of cattle, and the pungent smoke of the dung.

Everywhere through the gates and along the streets Cossack women are running with lighted rags in their hands. In the yards can be heard the sound of the cattle puffing and peacefully chewing the cud, and only the voices of women and children ring through the yards and streets. On workdays it is a rare thing when the drunken voice of a man is heard.

A Cossack woman, old and tall and masculine, with her rag torch in her hand, comes across the street from the opposite house, and asks Dame Ulitka for a light.

"Well, dame, have you got your work done up?" she asks.

"The girl is tending the fire. D'ye want a light?" asks Dame Ulitka, proud of being able to confer a favor.

The two old women go to the cottage together; Dame Ulitka's clumsy hands, not used to handling delicate objects, tremble as she takes off the cover of the precious match-box, for matches are a rarity in the Caucasus. The visitor sits down on the step, with the evident intention of having a little gossip.

[1] *Matushka*, little mother.

[2] Dairy, *izbushka* (diminutive of *izba*); literally, little hut. "The *izbushka*, among the Cossacks, is a low, cool, wooden structure where the milk products are boiled and kept." — AUTHOR'S NOTE.

"Well, dame, is your man at school?" she asks.

"Yes, he's always teaching the young ones, mother. He writes that he'll be here for the festival," replies the ensign's wife.

"There's a learned man for you! There's some good in that!"

"Of course there is!"

"And my Lukashka is at the outpost; he can't get leave of absence," says the visitor, though this is no news to the ensign's wife. She must say something about her Lukashka, who has just been enrolled as a Cossack, and whom she wishes to marry the ensign's daughter, Maryanka.

"Does he have to stay at the outpost?"

"Indeed he does, mother. He has not been home since Christmas. The other day I sent him some shirts by Fomushkin. He says all's well; the officers are pleased with the lad. They expect another attack of the abreks, they say. Lukashka, says he, is happy, all right."

"Well, thank the Lord for that," says the ensign's wife. "In one word, he is the Urvan!"

Lukashka had gained the name of *urvan*, or the seizer, because of his bravery in rescuing a young Cossack from the water just as he was drowning, and the ensign's wife called him by this name, so as to have something agreeable to say to Lukashka's mother.

"I bless the Lord for it every day — he is a good son, he is a brave lad; they all like him," says Lukashka's mother. "Only I wish he were married, then I could die contented."

"Well, are n't there girls enough in the stanitsa!" the shrewd Dame Ulitka asks, as she awkwardly fumbles with her crooked fingers in her attempt to put the cover on the match-box.

"Plenty of them, mother, plenty of them," says Lukashka's mother, and shakes her head. "Your girl, Maryanushka, there's a girl for you, her like is not to be found in the whole regiment."

The ensign's wife sees through her visitor's insinuation,

and, though Lukashka seems to her a promising Cossack, she turns the conversation, — in the first place, because she is the ensign's wife and rich, while Lukashka — well, he is the son of a mere Cossack, and his father is dead; in the second place, because she does not want to part with her daughter too soon. But the chief reason is that propriety demands such a course.

"Yes," says she, warily and discreetly, "Maryanushka is growing up; she 'll soon be a young woman."

"I will send the match-makers, yes, I will send them; come, let us arrange about the gardens; we will come and formally ask your favor," says Lukashka's mother. "We will come and pass the compliments to Ilya Vasilyevitch."

"What has Ilyas to do with it?" says the ensign's wife, haughtily. "I am the one who is to be spoken to. But there is time enough for all that."

Lukashka's mother sees, by the proud look on Dame Ulitka's face, that it would be inexpedient to say anything more, lights the match and sets fire to her rag torch, and, as she rises to go, she adds: —

"Don't forget, mother; remember what I have said. I am going now, I must get my fire started."

As she steps down through the street and waves her lighted torch in her outstretched hand, she meets Maryanka, who greets her with a courtesy.

"She 's a queenly maiden, a regular worker," she says to herself, as she looks at the beauty. "How much more has she got to grow, I should like to know! It 's high time for her to be married, yes, and in a good house of her own, and Lukashka is the husband for her!"

Dame Ulitka had still some work to do, but her heart was heavy within her and she sat on the threshold without stirring until Maryanka came to call her.

CHAPTER VI

THE men of the stanitsa spent their time in expeditions and at the cordon or *postki*, as the Cossacks call them.

This same Lukashka the Urvan, of whom the two old women had been talking at the cottage, was standing just before sunset on the watch-tower of the Nizhni-Prototsky "post," situated on the very bank of the Terek. As he leaned on the railing, he gazed with blinking eyes, now far away across the Terek, then down on his comrades, the Cossacks, but he rarely exchanged a word with them.

The sun was already nearing the snow-covered crest of the mountains, gleaming white from underneath feathery clouds. These clouds, billowing around their feet, took on darker and darker shadows.

The transparency of the evening was diffused through the atmosphere. From the thick wild forest breathed a fresh coolness, but at the post it was still hot. The voices of the Cossacks talking together rang clearer than usual and seemed to hover in the air. The swift, tawny Terek, eddying along its immovable banks, poured down in an ever rushing flood. It was now beginning to fall, and here and there the damp sand showed brown and gray along the banks and shallows. Directly opposite the outpost across the river it was all a wilderness; up to the very mountains stretched the endless steppe, with nothing in it but short reeds empty of life. A little to one side, on the low bank, could be seen the clay-built houses, the flat roofs and funnel-shaped chimneys, of a Chechen aul. From the height of his watch-tower, the Cossack's keen eyes could even at that distance follow in the evening haze of the peaceful village the blue and red dresses of the women as they moved about.

Although the Cossacks were expecting that at any moment the hostile abreks would cross over from the Tartar shore and attack them, especially now that it was the month of May, when the forests along the Terek are

so dense that it is extremely difficult for a person to force his way through them, and the river is so low that it can be forded almost anywhere; and although, only two days before, a Cossack messenger had galloped up from the regimental commander with a *tsuidulka*, or circular letter to all the posts, informing them that spies had brought word that a band of abreks, divided into squads of eight, were preparing to cross the Terek, so that especial caution was demanded, — still no special caution was observed at the "cordon."

The Cossacks, unarmed, without their horses being saddled, were engaged as if they were safe at home, one in fishing, another in tippling, another in hunting. Only the officer of the day had his horse saddled, but it was allowed to browse with its feet hobbled, along the edge of the forest. And only the sentinel on guard wore his cherkeska, and was armed with musket and dagger. The sergeant, a tall, haggard Cossack, with an extraordinarily long back and short legs and arms, in an unbuttoned beshmet, was sitting on the bank of the hut, his eyes closed with an expression of sovereign laziness and tedium, and resting his head first on one hand, then on the other.

An aged Cossack, with a wide, grayish black beard, and dressed in nothing but a shirt belted with a black leather strap, was stretched out at the edge of the river, and lazily watching the Terek as it monotonously rolled by its turbid, swirling waters.

Others, apparently overcome by the heat, half undressed, were engaged, one in washing his shirt by the water's edge, another in plaiting a bridle, while a third was purring a song, as he lay stretched out on the hot sand along the bank.

One of the Cossacks, with a thin face burned black by the sun, was apparently dead drunk, and lay on his back under one wall of the hut; two hours before he had been in the shadow, but now he was where the oblique rays of the glaring sun fell directly on him.

Lukashka, who was standing on the watch-tower, was a tall, handsome youth, twenty years old, very like his

mother. His face and his whole build, in spite of the angularity of youth, expressed great physical and moral strength. Although he had only recently been enrolled, yet, by the broad lines of his face and the steadfast assurance of his attitude, it was plain to see that he had already succeeded in acquiring that martial and rather haughty carriage peculiar to Cossacks, and to men generally who are in the habit of being constantly armed, that he was a Cossack and regarded himself at no discount from his real value. His wide cherkeska was torn in several places, his cap was set on the back of his head, in the fashion of the mountaineers, his leggings loosely twisted below the knees. His attire was not rich, but it fitted him with that peculiar Cossack smartness which consists in the imitation of the Chechen *jigit*, or brave.

With the genuine jigit everything is on a broad scale, his dress is ragged and careless, only his weapons are rich. But the adjustment, the fit, and the belting of his torn and ragged clothes, and the general equipment, unite to give a distinguished appearance which not every one is able to command, and which catches the eye of the Cossack or mountaineer.

Lukashka had this air of the genuine jigit; with his hand resting on his dagger, and blinking his eyes, he kept gazing at the distant aul. Taken separately, his features were not handsome; but any one who should see his superb physique, his intelligent face with its dark brows, could not help exclaiming, "A fine young fellow!"

"Why are all the women pouring out of the aul, I wonder?" he said in a clear voice, lazily separating his gleaming, white teeth, and not addressing any one in particular.

Nazarka, who was stretched out below, instantly lifted his head, and remarked: —

"They are probably going after water."

"It would be good sport to scare them with a shot!" said Lukashka, laughing. "How it would make them scatter!"

"You could n't shoot so far."

"Nonsense, mine would shoot clear over them! Just wait a bit! when their festival comes, I am going to visit Gireï-khan, and drink buza [1] with him!" exclaimed Lukashka, angrily waving his arm to defend himself from the mosquitoes which stuck to him.

A rustling in the thicket attracted the Cossacks' attention. A spotted mongrel setter, with his nose to the ground, and vigorously wagging his hairless tail, came running up to the post. Lukashka recognized the dog as belonging to Uncle Yeroshka, a huntsman of his neighborhood, and shortly after he caught sight of the man himself, making his way through the underbrush.

Uncle Yeroshka was a colossal Cossack with a wide, perfectly gray beard, and broad shoulders and chest, which in the woods, where there was no one with whom to compare him, did not seem huge, so well proportioned was his powerful frame.

He wore a ragged, half-buttoned peasant coat; his legs were wrapped up in buckskin porshni,[2] tied with twine; on his head was a rumpled white lambskin cap. Across one shoulder he carried a decoy for pheasants and a bag with a chicken for alluring hawks; over his other shoulder a wildcat which he had killed was slung by a cord; at the back of his belt were fastened a pouch with bullets, powder, and bread, a horsetail to flap away the gnats, a great dagger in a battered, blood-stained sheath, and a pair of pheasants.

Glancing up at the "cordon," he paused.

"Hey, Lyam!" he shouted to the dog, in such ringing bass that the woods far and near echoed with the sound. Then, shifting over his shoulder his clumsy percussion musket, called *flinta* by the Cossacks, he lifted his cap.

"Here 's to your health, good people! Hey!" he said, addressing the Cossacks in his jovial, powerful

[1] *Buza*, an appropriately named Tartar beverage, made of millet.

[2] *Porshni*, leggings made of undressed leather, which must be well soaked before they can be put on. — AUTHOR'S NOTE.

voice, which, without any effort, sounded as loud as if he were shouting to some one across the river.

"How are you, uncle? How are you?" cheerily sounded the voices of the young Cossacks, from all sides.

"What have you seen? Tell us the news," shouted Uncle Yeroshka, wiping the sweat from his broad, red face with the sleeve of his cherkeska.

"See here, uncle! You don't know what a hawk lives up in yonder plane tree! As soon as evening comes, then he swoops down!" said Nazarka, with a wink, and a twitch of his shoulder and leg.

"What's that you say!" exclaimed the old man, incredulously.

"It's a fact, uncle! you just sit up and watch[1] for him!" insisted Nazarka, with a laugh. The other Cossacks also laughed.

The jester had not seen any hawk, but it had long been the habit of the young Cossacks of the cordon to banter Uncle Yeroshka and play tricks on him every time that he came to see them.

"Oh, you fool! what a lie!" shouted Lukashka, from the watch-tower, to Nazarka.

Nazarka instantly became silent.

"If I must watch, then I'll watch," rejoined the old man, to the great satisfaction of all the Cossacks. "But have you seen any wild boars?"

"Go easy! Seen wild boars, indeed!" exclaimed the sergeant, very well content at the opportunity of having a little diversion. He turned over and scratched his long back with both hands. "Here we have abreks to catch; no wild boars for us. You haven't heard the news, hey, have you, uncle?" he went on to say, without any reason blinking his eyes and displaying his magnificent white teeth.

"Abreks, indeed?" replied the old man. "Nay, I hadn't heard! But, say, have you got any red wine? Give me a drink, goodman! I'm fagged out; that's a fact. Let me have a little time and I'll bring you

[1] *Posidi;* this verb means to watch for a wild beast. — AUTHOR'S NOTE.

some fresh meat; I promise you I will! Come, let me have some."

"So you want to watch for game here, do you?" asked the sergeant, as if he had not heard what the other said.

"I should like to watch for one night," replied Uncle Yeroshka. "Maybe I might shoot something for the festival; whatever I get, I'll give it to you. Fact!"

"Uncle, say, uncle!" shouted Luka, from the watch-tower, attracting attention to himself, and all the Cossacks looked at Lukashka. "Go to the upper brook; there you'll find a great drove. I am not guying. Fact! The other day one of our Cossacks shot one. I am telling you the honest truth," he added, setting his carbine behind him. His tone made it evident that he was not jesting.

"Ah, so Lukashka Urvan is here?" said the old man, looking up. "Where did he shoot him?"

"And so you did not see me, I am so small!" said Lukashka. "Right by the ditch, uncle," he continued earnestly, nodding his head. "We were going along by the ditch, when we heard a crackling in the bushes, but my gun was in its case. Then Ilyaska let fly..... Yes, and I will show you the place, uncle. It is not very far off. Just wait a little! I tell you, brother, I know all their haunts. Uncle Mosyef," he added, in a resolute and almost imperative tone, "it's time to relieve the guard," and, picking up his gun, without awaiting the word of command, he started to come down from the tower.

"Come down," said the sergeant, although his command came too late. "It's your turn, isn't it, Gurka?" he asked, looking around. "Go then." Then, turning to the old huntsman, "Your Lukashka has become an expert. He is going to follow in your footsteps; you can't keep him at home; the other day he killed one!"

CHAPTER VII

The sun had now set, and the shades of night were swiftly sweeping over from the forest.

The Cossacks had finished their duties about the "cordon" and were coming to the hut for supper. Only the old man, still in expectation of the hawk, sat under the tree, twitching the falcon attached to his foot. The hawk remained in the tree, and was not tempted down to the chicken.

Lukashka was taking his time in setting snares for pheasants in the bramble thicket, where the birds were wont to run, and singing song after song. In spite of his tall form and his big hands, it was plain to see that any sort of work, coarse or fine, prospered if he undertook it.

"Hé! Luka! the Cossacks have gone in to supper!" rang Nazarka's shrill voice from the thicket, a few steps away. Nazarka, with a live pheasant under his arm, struggled out from amid the brambles and stood on the footpath.

"Oh!" cried Lukashka, ceasing his song, "where did you find the bird? It must have been in one of my snares"....

Nazarka was of the same age as Lukashka, and had also been enrolled in the company that same spring. He was a little, ugly, lean, puny man, with a squeaking voice, which made one's ears ring. He was Luka's neighbor and chum.

Lukashka was sitting Tartar fashion on the grass and arranging his snare.

"I don't know whose it is.... probably was yours."

"Was it behind the well, near the chinar tree? Certainly it is mine! I set it yesterday evening."

Lukashka got up and looked at the captured pheasant. Smoothing the dark blue head, which the bird stretched out in terror, rolling its eyes, he took it into his hand.

"This time we'll have it made into pilaf; you kill it and pluck it."

"Say, shall we eat it ourselves, or give it to the sergeant?"

"Don't bother about him!"

"I don't like to kill it," said Nazarka.

"Give it to me."

Lukashka drew out the knife attached to his dagger and quickly plied it. The bird fluttered, but before it had time to spread its wings the bleeding head fell back palpitating.

"That's the way to do it!" exclaimed Lukashka, flinging down the bird. "It will make a fat pilaf."

Nazarka shuddered as he looked at it.

"Listen, Luka, that devil is going to send us out into ambush again," he remarked, as he picked up the pheasant. And by the term "that devil" he meant the sergeant. "He has sent Fomushkin after red wine. It was his turn. We have to go every night. He always picks us out."

Lukashka began to whistle and walked toward the post.

"Bring along the twine," he called back.

Nazarka did as he was told.

"I am going to tell him, now truly, I am going to tell him," continued Nazarka. "Let us say we won't go; that we are tired out, and that's the end of it! You tell him; it's a fact; he'll listen to you. If you don't, what will become of us?"

"Now, what has he found to growl about!" exclaimed Lukashka, who was evidently thinking of something else. "What rubbish! if you were at the village and he sent you off for the night, that would be hard luck! There you would be having a good time, but here what difference does it make whether we are at the 'cordon' or in ambush? It's all one! What a lad you are!"

"And are you going to the village?"

"I am going for the festival."

"Gurka declares that your Dunaŕka has taken up with Fomushkin," suddenly said Nazarka.

"Let her go to the devil!" snarled Lukashka, displaying his solid white teeth, but not smiling. "Don't you suppose I can find another one?"

"Well, this is what Gurka tells. He went to her house, says he, and her husband was away. Fomushkin was sitting there, eating pirogi. He sat for a while and then took his leave; but he stopped and listened under the window, and heard her say, 'Has that devil gone? Why, my dear, don't you eat another little pirog?' And then said she, 'Don't go home to sleep.' And Gurka, under the window, said, 'Bravo!'"

"You lie!"

"It's a fact, by God!"

Lukashka made no reply. After a little, he said:—

"Well, if she has found another lover, the devil take her! There are plenty of girls, aren't there? Anyway, I was getting tired of her."

"What a devil of a fellow you are!" said Nazarka. "You'd like to get in with the ensign's Maryanka! She isn't going about with any one yet, is she?"

Lukashka frowned.

"What's Maryanka? It's all the same to me."

"Well, now, you'd better try it."....

"You think so, do you? Aren't there enough of them at the stanitsa?"

And Lukashka again began to whistle, and went to the "cordon," pulling the leaves from the twigs. As he passed by the bushes he suddenly stopped short, drew out his knife, and cut off a smooth stick that had caught his eye.

"There, that will make a good ramrod," said he, making the stick whistle through the air.

The Cossacks were at supper in the plastered vestibule of the "cordon," sitting on the earth floor, around a low Tartar table, and talking about whose turn it was to go into the ambush.

"Who is going to-night?" shouted one of the Cossacks, addressing the sergeant, who was at the opened door of the hut.

"Let's see! whose turn is it to go?" mused the sergeant. "Uncle Burlak is off, Fomushkin is off," he said, not entirely sure of his ground. "Now, who among you will go? You and Nazar go," said he, ad-

dressing Luka. .... "And let Yergushof go, too; he will probably be awake by that time."

"You yourself would n't, if you were in his case!" said Nazarka, in an undertone.

The Cossacks laughed.

Yergushof was the Cossack who had been lying under the wall of the hut, in a drunken sleep. Just at that moment he made his appearance in the vestibule, rubbing his eyes.

Lukashka now got up and began to put his gun in order.

"And start as soon as you can; start immediately after supper!" said the sergeant, and, without waiting for any expression of opinion, he shut the door, having, evidently, little faith in the obedience of the Cossacks. "If it had not been especially ordered, I would not have sent them; but, then, you see, the captain may be here any minute, and, besides, they say that eight abreks are trying to cross the river," he muttered to himself.

"Well, I suppose we must go," says Yergushof. "It 's the order! Can't get out of it at such times. I say we must go."

Lukashka, in the meantime, holding a great piece of pheasant before his mouth, in both hands, and glancing, now at the sergeant, now at Nazarka, seemed to be perfectly indifferent to what was going on, and laughed at both.

The Cossacks had not as yet started for their ambush, when Uncle Yeroshka, who, since nightfall, had been sitting under the plane tree to no purpose, came into the dimly lighted vestibule.

"Well, boys," he said, in his deep voice, which rang through the low room, drowning the other voices, "I am going to join you. You may watch for Chechens, but I am going to watch for pigs!"

CHAPTER VIII

It was already perfectly dark when Uncle Yeroshka and the three Cossacks, in their *burkas* — felt cloaks — and with their muskets over their shoulders, went down along the Terek to the place selected for the ambuscade.

Nazarka was very loath to go, but Luka called to him and they quickly got under way. After they had gone a few steps in silence, the Cossacks turned aside from the ditch and went down to the Terek by a scarcely noticeable footpath among the reeds. On the bank lay a big, black log that had been left by the receding waters, and the reeds around it were freshly pressed down.

"Well, shall we watch here?" asked Nazarka.

"Why should n't we?" replied Lukashka. "You wait here; I 'll be back presently. I 'm only going to show uncle the way."

"This is the best place there is; no one can see us, but we get a good outlook," said Yergushof. "So we 'll stay here; we hit it first time."

Nazarka and Yergushof spread down their burkas and made themselves comfortable behind the log, while Lukashka went on with Uncle Yeroshka.

"Not very far from here, uncle," said he, noiselessly walking on in advance of the old man. "I will show you where they went. I am the only one who knows the place, brother!"

"Show it to me; you are a fine young Urvan," replied the old man, also in a whisper.

After they had gone a few steps, Lukashka halted, stooped down to a pool, and whistled.

"Here is where they came to drink; do you see?" said he, almost inaudibly, pointing to fresh tracks.

"Christ save you!" replied the old man. "The old boar has been scratching himself in this wallow behind the ditch!"[1] he continued. "You go back; I 'll watch here."

[1] *Karga v Kotlubanya*. *Kotlubanya* signifies a pit or sometimes a simple pool, in which the wild boar covers himself with mud, scratching his thick, cartilaginous skin. — Author's Note.

Lukashka pulled up his felt burka and walked back alone along the bank, quickly glancing, now at the left at the wall of reeds, now at the Terek rolling by under the bank.

"Who knows? Perhaps *he* too is watching or slinking about somewhere near!" said Lukashka to himself, meaning by "he" the Chechenets.

Suddenly a tremendous rushing and splashing in the river startled him and made him grasp his carbine. From the shore dashed a wild boar, grunting, and the black form, for an instant parting the gleaming surface of the water, disappeared among the reeds.

Luka quickly cocked his musket and aimed it, but, before he had time to shoot, the boar was out of range in the thicket. Spitting angrily, he continued his way. When he reached the place of ambuscade, he again halted and lightly whistled. The signal was returned, and he joined his comrades.

Nazarka, well wrapped up, was already asleep. Yergushof was sitting up, with his legs folded under him, and he hitched along a little so as to make room for Lukashka.

"It's jolly to sit here! Fact, this is a fine place!" said he. "Did you show him the way?"

"I found it for him," replied Lukashka, spreading out his burka. "But I just started up such a healthy boar from out of the river! It must have been the very same. Of course, you heard what a crashing he made."

"Yes, I heard the crashing of some wild beast, and I knew in a minute that it was a wild beast. And so I said to myself, 'Lukashka has been scaring him,'" said Yergushof, wrapping his burka round him. "I'll take a little nap now," he added. "Wake me up after cock-crowing, because we must have some system. I will sleep, and then afterwards you may sleep and I will stand guard. That's the way we'll do it."

"Thank you, I don't care to sleep," replied Lukashka.

The night was dark, warm, and calm. Only in one quarter of the sky the stars were shining; the larger part was covered with one vast cloud that rested on the

mountains. This black cloud, coalescing with the mountains, slowly grew larger and larger, though there was no wind, and its curving edge was sharply outlined against the deep, starry sky.

In front of the Cossack only the Terek and the dim distance were to be seen; behind him and on both sides was the circular wall of the reeds. Occasionally these reeds, apparently without cause, would begin to bend and rustle against one another. Seen from below, the waving rushes seemed like downy branches of trees against the unclouded portion of the sky.

In front of him, at his very feet, was the bank under which the current was sweeping. Farther away the gleaming, rushing mass of cinnamon-colored water monotonously rippled along the sand banks and bars. Still farther, the same masses of water and banks and the cloud all commingled indistinguishably in the darkness.

Over the surface of the water stretched black shadows, which the Cossack's experienced eyes made out to be logs floating down the stream. Once in a while the lightning, reflected in the water as in a black mirror, flashed forth the outline of the shelving shore on the other side.

The monotonous sounds of the night, the murmuring of the reeds, the snoring of the Cossacks, the humming of mosquitoes, and the rippling of the stream were now and again interrupted by some far-distant musket-shot, the caving-in of the bank, undermined by the water, now by the leaping of a big fish, now by the crashing of some wild beast in the thick, wild forest.

Once an owl flew down the Terek, regularly between each two strokes of its wings flapping them together. Straight over the Cossacks' heads it turned toward the forest, and, flying to an old chinar tree, flapped its wings together more quickly, and then for a long time scrambled about trying to get foothold on the branch.

At every such unwonted sound, the watchful Cossack listened with all his ears, strained his sight, and impatiently fingered his carbine.

The larger part of the night had passed. The black

cloud, which had passed off toward the west, now disclosed above its broken edges the clear starry sky, and above the mountains brightly gleamed the canted horns of the golden moon.

It began to feel cool.

Nazarka woke up, muttered a few words, and went to sleep again. Lukashka, finding it dull, got up, drew his knife from under his dagger, and began to whittle his stick into a ramrod. His mind was filled with thoughts of how the Chechens lived in the mountains; how their braves might cross to this side, how fearless of the Cossacks they were, and how it was possible that they would cross in some other place.

And he stretched himself and scanned the river, but nothing was to be seen. Afterward paying less heed to the river and the distant bank, indistinctly rising above the water in the faint light of the moon, he ceased to think about the Chechens, and merely began to long for the hour to wake his comrades, and the day when he could visit the village. The thought of the village called up to mind Dunka, his dushenka,[1] as the Cossacks call their mistresses, and his thought of her was mingled with bitterness.

Premonitions of morning,—a silvery mist floated white over the river, and young eagles screamed and flapped their wings near him. At last the call of the first cock was heard in the distant stanitsa, followed by a second, long and loud, and then answered by others in all directions.

"It's time to wake them," thought Lukashka, who had now finished his ramrod and felt his eyes growing heavy. He turned to his comrades, and was trying to make out which pair of legs belonged to which; but suddenly it seemed to him that something splashed on the other side of the Terek, and once more he scanned the brightening horizon of the mountains, under the canted crescent of the moon, and the outline of the bank, and the river, and the pieces of driftwood now clearly distinguishable as they floated down. It seemed

[1] *Dushenka*, affectionate diminutive of *dusha*, soul; sweetheart, darling.

to him that he was moving, while the Terek and the logs were stationary; but this illusion lasted only an instant.

Once more he began to gaze attentively.

One great black log, with a projecting limb, especially attracted his attention. Strangely enough, this log swam along the stream without rolling or swerving. It even seemed to him that it was not floating with the current, but was crossing the Terek along the shallows.

Lukashka craned his neck and eagerly followed its motions. The log ran aground on a sand-bank, stopped, and then moved in a peculiar way. Lukashka became convinced that he saw an arm behind the log.

"Here's a chance for me to shoot an abrek on my own account!" he said to himself, seizing his musket, and securely but hastily setting up a support on which he rested the barrel. He noiselessly raised the hammer, and, holding his breath, began to take aim at the log.

"I won't wake them," he thought; but his heart throbbed so violently in his breast that he stopped and listened. The log suddenly rolled over, and again, parting the water, made its way toward our shore.

"Only that it don't miss!" was his thought, and lo! there in the pale light of the moon gleamed the head of a Tartar at the front end of the log. He aimed his musket straight at the head. It seemed to him very near, right at the muzzle! He glanced along the barrel. "Yes, it is indeed an abrek," was his joyful thought, and, suddenly dropping heavily on one knee, he again adjusted his musket and aimed at the foe, who was, apparently, almost within reach of his long barrel; then, in accordance with the Cossack usage, to which he had been accustomed since childhood, murmuring, "To the Father and the Son!" he pulled the trigger.

A blinding flash for a moment lighted up the reeds and the water. A sharp, abrupt report rang out across the river, and the echo rumbled far away. The log no longer swam across the current, but floated down, swerving and rocking.

"Mind what you're doing, I say!" cried Yergushof, grasping for his carbine, and coming out from behind the log.

"Hold your tongue, you devil!" whispered Luka, with set teeth. "Abreks!"

"Whom did you shoot?" asked Nazarka. "Whom did you shoot, Lukashka?"

Lukashka made no reply. He reloaded his gun, and watched the log as it floated down the river. Before it had gone far, it ran aground on a sand-bank, and from under it a large body seemed to be moving in the water.

"What did you shoot? Why don't you tell?" insisted the Cossacks.

"Abreks! I tell you!" repeated Luka.

"What's that nonsense you're giving us? Did your gun go off?"....

"I have shot an abrek. Look there! That's what I shot!" rejoined Lukashka, his voice breaking in his excitement. He leaped to his feet. "A man was swimming across,".... said he, pointing to the sand-bar. "I killed him. Look yonder!"

"What a story that is!" repeated Yergushka, rubbing his eyes.

"Don't you believe it? Just you look! Look yonder!" cried Lukashka, seizing him by the shoulder, and drawing him so violently to himself that Yergushka groaned.

He looked in the direction indicated by Luka, and, seeing the body, suddenly changed his tone.

"Ena! I tell you there must be more of them! that's what I say!" he remarked timidly, and started to find his musket. "That one swam over first; perhaps they are here already; perhaps they are up a little way along the shore. I tell you it must be so."

Lukashka unbuckled his belt and began to take off his cherkeska.

"Where are you going? you fool!" cried Yergushof. "It's sheer foolhardiness! What do you want to throw away your life for? I tell you, if he's dead, he won't run away. Give us a little powder. Have you got any? Nazar! you make for the cordon lively, but

don't go along the shore; they would kill you, I am sure they would."

"What! Expect me to go alone? Go yourself!" said Nazarka, testily.

Lukashka, having taken off his cherkeska, had gone down to the water's edge.

"Don't run the risk, I tell you!" insisted Yergushof, engaged in pouring powder into the pan of his gun. "You see he does n't move, I see that plain enough. By morning, he won't have got any farther; so let 's send to the cordon. Hurry up, Nazar! Eka! what a coward you are! Don't be a coward, I tell you!"

"But Luka, Luka!" cried Nazar.—"Just tell us how you killed him."

Luka changed his mind about going instantly into the water.

"Hurry up to the cordon and I will wait here. Tell the Cossacks to send out the horse patrol. If they have crossed over to this side, we must take them."....

"I tell you they must have crossed over," said Yergushof, getting up; "of course we must take them."

And Yergushof and Nazarka got up, and, crossing themselves, started for the cordon, not along the shore, but breaking their way through the brambles and taking the forest path.

"See here, Luka, don't you stir!" was Yergushof's injunction, "or else they 'll cut you off. Don't you go into the water, I warn you."

"Go on, I know what I am about," replied Luka, and took his place again behind the log, examining his gun.

He sat there alone, gazing at the sand-bar, and listening for the sound of the Cossacks; but it was a long distance to the cordon, and he was tormented by impatience. It occurred to him that the abreks who had accompanied the dead one might make their escape. He felt the same feeling of vexation against the abreks who were escaping now, as he had felt the evening before at the loss of the boar. He kept looking now on this side, now on that, expecting to see some one appear,

and, with his musket on the rest, he was ready to fire.

It never entered his head that he himself might be killed.

CHAPTER IX

It was now growing quite light. The abrek's whole body was now plainly in sight, as it rested on the sand-bar, swaying slightly in the current.

Suddenly, not far from the Cossack, the reeds crackled, steps were heard, and the tops of the reeds were bent. The Cossack cocked the second barrel, and muttered his "To the Father and the Son."

As soon as the gun clicked the steps came to a stop.

"Hey! Cossacks! don't shoot your uncle!" rang out the imperturbable bass, and Uncle Yeroshka, parting the reeds, came directly to him.

"By God! I nearly killed you," said Lukashka.

"What have you shot?" asked the old man. The old man's sonorous voice, echoing in the woods and along the river, suddenly broke in on the silence of the night and the mystery surrounding the Cossack. It seemed as if it grew suddenly lighter and brighter.

"You did not see anything at all, uncle, but I .... I killed a wild beast!" said Lukashka, uncocking his gun and rising with unnatural composure. The old man gazed steadily at the abrek's back, and now plainly in sight, with the Terek rippling around it.

"He was swimming on his back with the log. I caught sight of him. .... Just look there! Look! He 's in blue drawers; he 's dropped his musket. .... Do you see? What?" exclaimed Lukashka.

"Do you think I 'm blind?" growled the old man, and a strange mixture of seriousness and sternness appeared on his face. "You have killed a jigit!" he said, in a tone that seemed to express pity.

"I was sitting this way and looking, and I saw something dark on the other side. And I looked again; it

was just as if a man came down and fell into the water. How remarkable! And then the log, a healthy-looking log, comes swimming along, but does n't swim with the current, but strikes across. I look; a head 's on the other side of it. Strange, was it? I lie low, but can't see anything for the rushes; then I stood up, but the beast — he must have heard, I think, for he crept up on a sand-bar and looked around. 'You 're mistaken,' thinks I, 'you don't escape me.' Well, he crept out and looked around. (Oh! it choked me to see him!) I had my gun ready, did n't stir, and waited. Well, I stood and stood, and then he started off swimming again; and when he swam out into the moonlight, then I got a glimpse of his back. 'To the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost!' As soon as the smoke cleared up a little, I saw that he was floundering. He groaned, unless I am much mistaken. 'Well, glory to Thee, O Lord,' thinks I, 'I have killed him.' And when he reached the sand-bar I could see him plainly; he tried to get up, and had n't strength enough. He staggered, staggered and fell. I could see it as plain as day..... There! he has stopped moving! he must be dead! The Cossacks have gone up to the cordon, so that the others may not get away."

"And so you got him!" said the old man. "He 's quite a distance, brother, even now."..... And again he shook his head sadly.

At this moment, loud talking and the crackling of dry branches were heard along the shore, and the Cossacks, mounted and on foot, made their appearance.

"Have you got the kayuk? Say!" shouted Luka.

"You 're a hero, Luka; bring him to shore," cried one of the Cossacks.

Lukashka, without waiting for the boat, began to undress, keeping his eyes all the time on his booty.

"Hold on! Nazarka is bringing the kayuk," cried the sergeant.

"Fool! Maybe he is still alive! only feigning! Take your dagger!" shouted another Cossack.

"Rubbish!" cried Luka, pulling off his drawers. He

was speedily undressed. Then he crossed himself, and with a bound dashed into the water with a splash, wet himself all over, and then, making wide sweeps with his white arms and lifting his back high out of the water at every stroke, he struck out across the current and made for the sand-bar where the abrek lay. The band of Cossacks stood on the bank loudly conversing in many voices. Three men on horseback started to ride along the trail. The boat appeared coming around the bend.

Lukashka climbed up on the bar, bent down to the body, rolled it over two or three times.

"He's dead, fast enough!" he cried, in a loud voice.

The Chechenets had been shot through the head. He wore a pair of blue drawers, a shirt, and cherkeska; a gun and a dagger were fastened to his back..... Above all was tied the big branch which had at first deceived Lukashka.

"That's the way the carp was caught!" cried one of the Cossacks standing round in a circle, as the body of the Chechenets, brought ashore in the boat, was laid down on the bank in the thick grass.

"How yellow he is!" exclaimed another.

"Where have our men gone to search for them? Probably they are all on the other side. If this one had not been their leader, he would not have swum over in that way. Why should one come over alone?" asked a third.

"He must have been a wily one to try it before all the others. He is evidently a great jigit," said Lukashka, derisively, wringing the water out of the wet garments, and shivering as he stood on the shore. "His beard is dyed and clipped."

"And he has a coat in the bag on his back. He would have swum easier without it," said some one.

"Listen, Lukashka!" said the sergeant, holding in his hands the abrek's dagger and gun; "you keep the dagger and keep the coat, but, see here, let me have the gun; I will give you three silver rubles for it.

See, the vent-hole is clear," he added, blowing down the muzzle. "I should like to have it as a memento."

Lukashka made no reply; evidently this request was not at all to his mind, but he knew that there was no escape from it.

"Just look, what devilish trash!" he said, frowning, and flinging the Chechen's coat to the ground — "if only the zipun had been good for anything; but it's such a beggarly rag!"

"It'll be useful in going after wood," remarked some one.

"Mosyef! I'd like to go home," said Lukashka, evidently forgetting his vexation in the recollection that it was a good chance to get something worth while in return for his gift to his superior.

"All right, go then!"

"Bring him up to the cordon, boys!" cried the sergeant to the Cossacks, while all the time examining his gun. "And we must make a shelter to keep the sun from him. Perhaps they will come down from the mountains to ransom him."

"It isn't hot yet," was the comment of one.

"But the jackals might get hold of him. That wouldn't be good, now, would it?" replied one of the Cossacks.

"We will set a watch, and then they will come to ransom him; it would be bad if anything should happen to him."

"Well, Lukashka, just as you please; but you must set up a bucketful for the boys," said the sergeant, gayly.

"Yes, that's the proper thing to do," assented the Cossacks. "See what luck God has sent him! he has killed an abrek without even seeing him!"

"Buy the dagger and the zipun. Give big money for them. And I will throw in the drawers. God be with you," said Luka, "they won't fit me; he was a lean devil!"

One Cossack bought the zipun for a silver ruble, or *monet*, as it is called in the Caucasus.

Another gave two buckets of vodka for the dagger.

"Now, boys, you can have a drink, I will set up a bucketful," said Luka; "I myself will bring it from the stanitsa."

"Say, why not cut up the drawers into kerchiefs for the girls?" cried Nazarka.

The Cossacks burst into a laugh.

"Quit your laughing!" said the sergeant, "and bring along the body. We must lay the carrion near the hut." ....

"What are you waiting for? Carry him along, boys," cried Lukashka, peremptorily; and the Cossacks, though they did not relish touching the body, obeyed his word as if he had been their commander.

Having dragged the body a few steps, they laid him down with the legs collapsing lifelessly, and stood for some time in silence.

Nazarka went to the body, and lifted the head, which had fallen back, so as to see the round, gory bullet-hole in the man's very temple.

"It marked him well, did n't it? Went right through his brain," he observed. "No danger of his being lost, his folks will know him when they see him."

No one had anything to say, and again the angel of silence spread her wings over the Cossacks.

The sun had now risen, and its broken rays flecked the dewy green. The Terek murmured as it flowed not far away through the awakening forest. On all sides the pheasants cried to one another, greeting the morn.

The Cossacks, silent and motionless, stood around the dead man and looked at him. The cinnamon-colored body, in wet blue drawers alone, now made darker by the water, and belted tight about the hollow belly, was well proportioned and beautiful.

His muscular arms lay rigidly along his ribs. His livid, closely shaven, round head, with the clotted wound in the temple, was bent back. The smooth, sunburnt brow was sharply defined against the line where the shaven hair began. The glassy, open eyes, with deep-set pupils, gazed up, as if beyond them. A good-natured,

shrewd smile seemed still to hover over the thin, curling lips, half covered by the red, clipped mustache. The small finger joints were covered with reddish hairs; the fingers were doubled in and the nails were tinged with red.

Lukashka was not yet dressed; he was dripping wet; his neck was redder and his eyes gleamed brighter than usual; his wide, broad cheeks trembled; from his fair, healthy body arose a scarcely perceptible vapor into the cool morning air.

"He also was a man," he observed, evidently admiring the abrek.

"Yes, if you had fallen into his hands, he would n't have shown you any mercy," replied one of the Cossacks.

The angel of silence had taken her flight. The Cossacks started on their way, talking as they went. Two of them went to cut branches for the shelter. The others sauntered along toward the cordon. Luka and Nazarka hastened to prepare for their visit to the stanitsa.

Half an hour later Lukashka and Nazarka, almost running, and talking incessantly as they went, were on their way home through the thick forest which separates the Terek from the stanitsa.

"Don't you tell her that I sent you, mind you, but just go and find out if her husband is at home, will you?" said Luka, in a sharp voice.

"I am going to Yamka's, — we 'll have a spree, won't we?" asked the devoted Nazar.

"When should we have a spree if not to-day?" replied Luka.

As soon as they reached the stanitsa, the two Cossacks filled themselves with drink, and flung themselves down to sleep till evening.

CHAPTER X

On the third day after the events above narrated, two companies of the Caucasus infantry regiment came to be quartered at Novo-Mlinsk.

The baggage-wagons already stood unhitched in the middle of the square. The cooks, having dug a trench, and lugged from various house-yards whatever sticks of wood they happened to find lying about, were busy preparing kasha gruel. The sergeants were calling the roll. The baggage-men were driving in stakes for fastening the horses.

The billeters, as if they were at home, sauntered through the streets and lanes, assigning quarters to officers and men. Here were green caissons set in martial array. Here were the company wagons and horses. Here were kettles, in which the kasha was boiling. Here were the captain and the lieutenant, and Onisim Mikhaïlovitch, the sergeant-major.

And all this array found itself in the very same stanitsa where, according to report, the companies had been ordered to encamp, hence the companies were at home.

"Why are they stationed here? What sort of men are these Cossacks? Are they pleased at the idea of having the men quartered on them? Are they dissenters or not?"

This is none of their concern. The soldiers, released from duty, tired and dusty, scatter in noisy disorder, like a swarm of bees, over the streets and squares; resolutely paying no heed to the unfriendly disposition of the Cossacks, they force their way into the houses in groups of twos and threes; with rollicking and clattering of muskets, they hang up their trappings; they select places, and banter the women.

A great group is collected in the place so loved by the soldiers — around the kasha-kettle — and, with pipes between their teeth, they gaze now at the smoke as it rises into the hot sky and floats away like white clouds, now at the camp-fires, quivering like melted glass in the

clear air, or else they make sharp and witty remarks about the Cossack men and women because they differ so entirely from the Russians in their way of living.

In all the yards soldiers are to be seen; their laughter rings out, and the sharp, angry cries of the Cossack women trying to protect their homes, and refusing to give water or utensils.

The little boys and girls, clinging to their mothers or to one another, follow with affright and amazement all the movements of these soldiers whom they have never seen before, or tag after them at a respectful distance. The old Cossacks come forth from their huts, sit down on the embankments, and look in gloomy silence at the hubbub of the soldiers, — as it were scorning it all and not understanding what is to be the result of it all.

Olyenin, who for the last three months had been enrolled as a yunker in the Caucasus regiment, was assigned quarters in one of the best houses of the stanitsa, at the Ensign Ilya Vasilyevitch's, in other words, at Dame Ulitka's.

"What do you think of this, Dmitri Andreyevitch?" asked the panting Vanyusha of Olyenin, who, after a five-hour ride on his Kabarda horse, bought in Groznaya, joyfully galloped into the yard of his new home.

"What's the matter now, Ivan Vasilyevitch?" he asked, in return, soothing his horse and glancing gayly at Vanyusha, who, with hair in disorder and with the sweat pouring down his dejected face, was unpacking the things brought on the baggage-train with which he had come.

Olyenin in appearance was an entirely different man. Instead of smoothly shaven cheeks, he wore a young mustache and a beard. Instead of the pale, unhealthy complexion of one whose nights are spent in dissipation, he showed a fresh and ruddy tan over his cheeks, forehead, and ears. Instead of a perfectly new black coat, he wore a dirty white cherkeska, with wide lapels, and carried a rifle. Instead of a stiff, starched collar, his sunburned neck was clasped by the red circlet of a Persian beshmet. He was dressed in the Cherkes style,

but he did not wear it well; every one would have known that he was a Russian and not a jigit. It was all right and yet all wrong! But his whole person breathed of health, happiness, and self-satisfaction.

"It may be very laughable to you here," exclaimed Vanyusha, "but just you try to talk with these people; they won't let you near them, and that's the end of it. You can't get a word out of them," and Vanyusha angrily flung an iron pail on the threshold. "They aren't any kind of Russians!"

"Well, did you complain to the head of the stanitsa?"

"I don't know where to find him," replied Vanyusha, testily.

"Who has insulted you so here?" demanded Olyenin, looking around.

"The devil knows! Tfu! The actual owner isn't here; gone down to the kriga,[1] they say. But the old woman is a devil! The Lord preserve us from her!" ejaculated Vanyusha, clutching his head. "How we are going to live here is more than I can tell! Worse than Tartars, by God! The idea of calling them Christians! Why, in comparison to them, the Tartar is a gentleman! 'Gone down to the kriga!' What do they mean by the kriga, I should like to know?" cried Vanyusha, in conclusion, as he turned away.

"So they aren't like our people at home?" said Olyenin, bantering his man and not dismounting from his horse.

"Let me have the horse, please," said Vanyusha, who was evidently wholly upset by this new order of things, but submissive to his fate.

"So the Tartars are more gentlemanly than they? Hey, Vanyusha?" repeated Olyenin, slipping off from his horse and slapping the saddle with his hand.

"Yes, laugh as much as you like. You'll find enough to laugh at," said Vanyusha, in a tone of vexation.

"Just wait; don't lose your temper, Ivan Vasilyitch," said Olyenin, still smiling. "Just let me go to the peo-

[1] *Kriga* means the place on the river bank where the nets are set for fish; the weirs. — AUTHOR'S NOTE.

ple here; you wait; I will make everything all straight. You 'll see how fine we will live here! Only don't get so stirred up!"

Vanyusha made no reply, but, blinking his eyes, gazed contemptuously after his master and shook his head. Vanyusha looked on Olyenin merely as upon a master. Olyenin looked upon Vanyusha only as on a servant. And both of them would have been much surprised if any one had told them that they were friends. But they were friends, even though they did not know it.

Vanyusha had been taken into the house when he was a lad of eleven, and Olyenin was just about the same age. When Olyenin was fifteen, he at one time undertook to give Vanyusha some lessons and taught him to read French, and Vanyusha was very proud of this accomplishment. Even now, when he felt in a particularly good frame of mind, he made use of French words, and when he did so always laughed like a ninny.

Olyenin mounted the steps of the cottage and pushed open the door into the vestibule.

Maryana, in nothing but a pink shirt, such as the Cossack girls usually wear when at home, sprang back from the door in affright, and, crouching against the partition, hid the lower part of her face in the flowing sleeve of the Tartar garment.

As Olyenin opened the door still wider, he saw in the dim light the Cossack maiden's tall and well-proportioned form. With the quick and eager curiosity of youth, he was irresistibly impelled to notice the full, virgin lines, in full relief under the thin cotton shirt, and the handsome black eyes fixed upon him with infantile terror and wild curiosity.

"There she is!" said Olyenin to himself. "I wonder if there are many of them like her," was the next thought that occurred to him, and he opened another door and entered the cottage. Old Dame Ulitka, likewise in a single garment, was stooping down and sweeping the floor, with her back turned to him.

"Good afternoon, matushka. Here I have come to arrange about my quarters ..." he began.

The Cossack dame, without straightening up, bent on him her stern but still handsome face.

"What have you come for? Are you trying to turn us into ridicule? Hey? I'll teach you! The black pest take you!" she screamed, looking askance from under her scowling brows at the newcomer.

Olyenin had thought hitherto that the toil-worn, heroic army of the Caucasus, to which he belonged, would be received with a warm welcome everywhere, especially by the Cossacks, their comrades in the war; and therefore such a reception as this puzzled him. Not allowing himself to be bluffed, however, he was going to explain that it was his intention to pay for his accommodations, but the old dame did not give him a chance to speak.

"What have you come for? Who wants such scabs as you? A pox on your ugly mug! You just wait till my man comes! He'll show you your place. I don't want your cursed money. Do you suppose we've never seen any such thing? Stench up the house with tobacco smoke and expect to settle for it with money! Was there ever such impudence? Pity they didn't shoot your heart out!" screamed the old dame, in a piercing voice, utterly confounding Olyenin.

"It seems that Vanyushka was right," thought he. "The Tartar is gentler," and he went out of the cottage, followed by Dame Ulitka's insults.

As he went, Maryana, still in nothing but her pink shirt, but with her face, all except the eyes, wrapped up in a white kerchief, unexpectedly dashed by him out of the entry. Her bare feet pattered along the vestibule, and she darted down from the steps, then stopped suddenly, and, after looking with laughing eyes at the young man for a brief moment, disappeared around the corner of the house.

The beautiful maiden's firm, youthful bearing, the untamed look of her eyes gleaming out from the white kerchief, and the fine proportions of her lithe form made now an even more powerful impression on Olyenin.

"She must be the one!" he said to himself, and feeling less concern than ever about arranging his quarters,

and trying to get another glimpse of Maryanka, he went back to Vanyusha.

"Did you ever see such a wild girl!" said Vanyusha, still busy unpacking, but by this time in a better frame of mind. "She's a regular colt! *La femme*," he added, in a loud, enthusiastic voice and a burst of laughter.

CHAPTER XI

Toward evening the master of the house returned from his fishing, and, finding that he could get pay for his lodgings, he pacified his wife, and satisfied Vanyusha's demands.

Everything was soon in order in the new quarters. The man and his wife retired to their winter rooms, and for the consideration of three *moneta*, or silver rubles, a month, gave up the cooler part of the cottage to the yunker.

Olyenin ate luncheon and took a nap. He awoke toward evening, washed himself, brushed his hair, ate his dinner, and, lighting a cigarette, sat down by the window facing the street. The heat had somewhat abated. The oblique shadow of the cottage, with its carved ridgepole, lay across the dusty street, and even broke on the lower part of the opposite house, the slanting roof of which, thatched with reeds, gleamed in the rays of the setting sun. The air was growing cool. All was still in the stanitsa. The soldiers were settled in their quarters and were quiet.

The cattle had not yet been driven in, and the people of the village had not yet returned from their work.

Olyenin's lodgings were almost at the end of the stanitsa. Occasionally, in the distance beyond the Terek, in the very direction from which Olyenin had come, could be heard the sounds of shots — on the Chechnya heights or the Kumuitsky plain. Olyenin was in very good spirits after his three months of camp life; his freshly washed face felt cool; his whole vigorous frame had a sense of cleanliness to which he had

not been accustomed during the campaign; all his limbs, now fully rested, were full of serenity and strength.

His mind was also clear and free from troubles. He reviewed the expedition, — the perils which he had undergone. He recollected that while he was in peril he had behaved well, that he had not been less courageous than the others, and that he had been received into the good fellowship of the heroic *Kavkaztsui*.

His recollections of Moscow were — God knows where! His old life was wiped out and a new life had begun, — a wholly new life in which there was as yet no error to be set down against him. Here, like a new man among new men, it was possible for him to win a new and good report. He experienced a youthful sensation of exorbitant enjoyment of life, and, as he looked out of the window at the boys spinning their tops in the shadow near the house, or around his new lodgings so comfortably arranged, he thought how pleasantly he was situated in this new life in the stanitsa.

He gazed over toward the mountains and the sky, and there was mingled with all his recollections and dreams the stern realization of the majesty of nature.

His life here had not begun as he had expected when he first set out from Moscow, but far better than he had expected.

The mountains, the mountains, the mountains made themselves felt in all his thoughts, in all his feelings!

"He 's sold his dog! he has licked the jug! Uncle Yeroshka has kissed his dog!" suddenly cried the Cossack children who had been driving their tops under the window, and they ran to the corner of the street. "He has sold his dog! He has swapped his dagger for drink!" cried the urchins, crowding together and scampering about.

These jibes were directed to Uncle Yeroshka, who, with his gun over his shoulders and a bunch of pheasants at his belt, was returning from the hunt.

"It 's my sin, children! it 's my sin!" he replied, wildly waving his arms and glancing at the windows of

the cottages on both sides of the street. "I let the dog go for drink! It's my sin!" he reiterated, evidently angry, but pretending that it was all the same to him.

Olyenin was surprised at the way the urchins behaved toward the old huntsman, but he was still more astonished at the strong, intelligent face and powerful build of the man whom they called Uncle Yeroshka.

"Uncle![1].... Cossack!".... he called to him. "Come in here!"

The old man looked at the window and paused.

"Your health, good man!" said he, lifting his cap from his closely shaven head.

"Your health, good man!" replied Olyenin. "What are those little rascals shouting at you for?"

Uncle Yeroshka came up to the window.

"They make sport of an old chap like me. That's nothing. I like 'em. Let 'em get their sport out of their old uncle," said he, with those decisive, harmonious tones in which old and dignified people are wont to speak. "Are you the commander of the force? Hey?"

"No, I am a yunker. But where did you kill those pheasants?" asked Olyenin.

"I killed the three hens in the woods," replied the old man, turning his broad back to the window. The three pheasants, which had stained his cherkeska with blood, were fastened by their heads to his belt.

"Have n't you had any yet?" he asked. "If you like 'em, take a brace. Na!" and he thrust two pheasants in through the window. "What? are you fond of hunting, too?" he inquired.

"Indeed I am. On the expedition I shot four."

"Four? That's a good many!" said the old man, ironically. "But do you drink? Do you like chikhir?"[2]

"What do you suppose? Of course I enjoy drinking!"

[1] *Dyedushka*, affectionate diminutive of *dyed*, literally grandfather! Uncle would be *dyadushka*, diminutive of *dyadya*, by which term the children address him.

[2] *Chikhir*, red Caucasian wine; it also means green wine.

"Hey! Yes, I see you are a fine young fellow! You and I must be kunaks,"[1] said Uncle Yeroshka.

"Come in," said Olyenin. "Here, we 'll try some of your red wine."

"Well, I might come in," said the old man. "But here, take your pheasants."

It was plain to see by the old man's face that the yunker pleased him, and he instantly perceived that it would not cost him anything to get drunk at his expense, and therefore it would be good policy to give him the brace of pheasants.

In a few moments Uncle Yeroshka's form appeared at the door of the cottage. Here Olyenin first realized the man's real size and powerful build, although his red, cinnamon-colored countenance, framed in a bushy beard perfectly white, was covered with wrinkles furrowed by old age and a laborious life.

The muscles of his legs, arms, and shoulders were as full and solid as would be expected only in a young man. The scars of deep wounds could be seen on his head, under his short hair. His thick, sinewy neck was covered with checkered folds like that of an ox. His freckled hands were bruised and scratched.

He stepped easily and lightly across the threshold, freed himself of his gun, stood it up in the corner, cast a quick glance around, taking in the general aspect of things, and came into the middle of the room, making no noise with his feet, which were, as usual, wrapped up in buckskin porshni. He brought with him a strong but not disagreeable odor, compounded of wine, vodka, powder, and clotted blood.

Uncle Yeroshka bowed toward the holy picture, smoothed his beard, and then, going straight up to Olyenin, gave him his black, stout hand.

"*Koshkildui!*" said he.

That is a Tartar expression, which means, "Wishing you good health," or, "Peace be with you."

[1] *Kunak*, the term applied to members of a guest friendship between the Russians and the mountaineers.

"*Koshkildui!* I know!" replied Olyenin, giving him his hand.

"É! you know nothing about it; you don't know our ways, you fool!" said Uncle Yeroshka, reproachfully shaking his head. "If any one says, '*Koshkildui*' to you then you must reply, '*Allah razi bo sun!* — God save you!' That's the way, my father, and not '*Koshkildui!*' I will teach you all about it. That's the way your Russian Ilya Moseyitch lived with us here; he and I were kunaks. He was a fine young fellow. Tippler, thief, hunter! oh, what a hunter he was! I taught him all about it."

"What will you teach me?" asked Olyenin, becoming more and more interested in the old man.

"I will take you out hunting; I will teach you to catch fish; I will show you the Chechens; and, if you want a dushenka, I will get one for you. That's the kind of a man I am — a regular joker!" And the old man laughed. "I will sit down, my father; I am tired. *Karga?*" he asked, with a questioning look.

"What does *karga* mean?" asked Olyenin.

"That means 'good,' in the Georgian speech. I am always saying that. It's a byword of mine; my favorite expression, — *karga;* when I say that, it means that I am joking. How is it, my father? will you send out and get some red wine? Do you keep a man? Do you? His name Ivan?" cried the old huntsman. "All your men are named Ivan, are n't they? Is yours Ivan?"

"Certainly he's Ivan. .... Vanyusha! please, get some red wine of Dame Ulitka and bring it here."

"Ivan and Vanyusha! It's all the same thing. Why are your body-men all called Ivan? Ivan!" said the old man, repeating the name over and over. .... "Young man,[1] ask to have it from a cask that has been opened. Ah! they have the best red wine in the stanitsa. But don't give more than thirty kopeks a quart for it; the old hag, she'd like to .... Our people are a cursed, stupid lot," continued Uncle Yeroshka, in a confidential tone, after Vanyusha had gone out. "They don't call you

[1] *Batyushka.*

people at all. In their eyes, you are worse than the Tartars. The Russians they hold to be low trash. But, in my opinion, though you are a soldier, still you are a man; you also have a soul in your body! That's my idea, now. Ilya Moseyitch was a soldier, but what a golden fellow he was! Isn't that so, my father? And that's one reason why our people don't like me. But it makes no difference to me. I'm a jolly fellow; I like everybody that comes along; my name's Yeroshka; that's what it is, my father."

And the old man caressingly slapped the young Russian on the shoulder.

CHAPTER XII

Vanyusha, meantime, who had succeeded in getting his housekeeping arrangements in running order, and had even been trimmed up by the regimental barber (as a sign that the company was in more commodious quarters), had pulled his trousers out of his boot-legs, and was now in the most amiable frame of mind. He gazed at Yeroshka attentively but not at all benevolently, as if he were some sort of strange wild beast, shook his head at the floor which he had tracked over, and, pulling out from under the bench two empty bottles, went off to the mistress of the house.

"Good evening, worthy people," said he, determined to be particularly sweet. "The barin sent me to buy some chikhir. Be kind enough to fill these."

The old dame made no reply. Maryana was standing before a little Tartar mirror and arranging her kerchief over her head. She silently gazed at Vanyusha.

"I will pay the money down, honored people," said Vanyusha, rattling the coins in his pocket. "You be polite and we will be polite too; that's the best way," he added.

"How much?" demanded the old dame, curtly.

"A couple of quarts."

"Go, child, draw it for him," said Dame Ulitka, turning

to her daughter. "Draw it from the opened cask, darling."

The maiden took the key and a jug, and, accompanied by Vanyusha, left the room.

"Tell me, please, what sort of a young woman that is," asked Olyenin, pointing to Maryanka, who just then passed by the window.

The old man winked, and nudged the young officer's elbow.

"Wait a bit," said he, and thrust his head out of the window. "K-khm! k-khm!" he coughed and roared. "Maryanushka, ah, sister Maryanka! Love me, dushenka!.... I am a joker!" he said, in a whisper, addressing Olyenin.

The girl, evenly and vigorously swinging her arms, passed by the window with the dashing, jaunty gait peculiar to the Cossack women. She did not turn her head, but merely gave the old man a deliberate glance from her dark eyes, from under their long lashes.

"Love me and you will be happy," cried Yeroshka, winking at the officer and looking at him questioningly. "I am a bravo; I am a joker," he went on to say. "She's a queenly girl, hey!"

"She's a beauty," exclaimed Olyenin. "Bring her in!"

"Ni, ni," replied the old man. "She's to be married to Lukashka, — Luka, a Cossack bravo, a jigit. He killed an abrek a day or two ago. I'll find you a better one. I'll get you one who dresses all in silks; yes, and in silver too. What I promise, I perform. I'll have a beauty for you."

"Old man, what are you saying?" demanded Olyenin. "Didn't you know that was a sin?"

"A sin? Where's the sin?" asked the old man, resolutely. "Is it a sin to look at a pretty girl? Is it a sin to go about with one? Is it a sin to love one? Is it so with you there? No, my father, that isn't a sin, but a saving grace! God made you, and God made the wench. He made all things, my dear boy.[1] And so

[1] *Batyushka*, little father.

it's no sin to look at a pretty little wench. That's what she's made for, to be loved and to have a good time with! That's my idea of it, my good man."

Passing through the courtyard and coming into the dark, cool wine-cellar filled with casks, Maryana, with the usual prayer, went to one of them and filled her dipper from it. Vanyusha, standing at the door, grinned as he looked at her. It seemed to him terribly ridiculous that she wore nothing but a shirt, fitting tightly behind and loosely in front, and still more ridiculous that she had a string of half-ruble pieces around her neck. His feeling was that this was un-Russian, and that the people at home would laugh to see such a damsel. "*La fil kom sé tré byé*,[1] for a variety," he said to himself. "I shall have to tell the barin about her."

"What are you standing there for, you devil?" suddenly cried the girl. "Here, give me the jug!"

Having filled the jug full of cool, red wine, Maryana handed it to Vanyusha.

"Give the money to mamuka," said she, pushing back the hand that held out the coins to her.

Vanyusha laughed outright.

"Why are you so touchy, my dear?" said he, good-naturedly, waiting while the girl shut up the cask.

She began to laugh.

"But are you polite?"

"The master and I are very polite," replied Vanyusha, with conviction. "We are so polite that wherever we have been quartered they have liked us. You see, he's a nobleman."

The girl stopped and listened.

"And is he married, your master there?"[2] she asked.

"No! Our barin is young and a bachelor. Because, of course, the nobility never can get married while they are young," explained Vanyusha, didactically.

"You don't say! A man gets to be a fat buffalo like that and yet too young to marry! Is he the captain of all of you?" she went on to ask.

[1] Meaning *La fille comme c'est très belle*, the girl is very pretty.
[2] She uses the Polish term, *pan*.

"My gentleman is a yunker; that means he isn't a regular officer yet. But he's of more consequence than a general — he's a big man. Because not only our colonel but the Tsar himself knows him," explained Vanyusha, proudly. "We aren't like the rest of the poor trash in the army, but our papenka is a senator himself; he has more than a thousand serfs, and he sends us thousands of rubles. And so they like us everywhere. And sometimes even a captain has n't any money. So what is the use?" ....

"Come, I am going to lock up," said the girl, interrupting.

Vanyusha brought in the wine and explained to Olyenin that "*la fil sé tré zhuli*," and immediately went out with his silly laugh.

CHAPTER XIII

In the meantime they were beating the tattoo in the square. The people were returning from their labors. The herds were lowing in the gates, raising a cloud of dust which looked like gold, and the girls and women were bustling about through the streets and yards, getting their cattle home. The sun had entirely sunk behind the distant, snowy crests. A dove-colored shadow rested along the earth and sky. Over the darkening gardens the stars began faintly to glisten, and the stanitsa was slowly relapsing into silence.

After they had housed their cattle the Cossack women collected on the street corners or sat down on the terraces, cracking melon seeds. Maryanka, who had already milked the two cows and the buffalo, had joined one such group, composed of several women and girls and one old Cossack.

The talk ran on the killing of the abrek. The Cossack was telling the story; the women kept asking questions.

"Well, his reward, I suppose, will be very large, won't it?" asked one Cossack girl.

"If it is n't, it ought to be! They say they will send him a cross."

"And that Mosyef tried to insult him. He took away his gun, but the officers in Kizlyar have heard about it."

"He 's a mean fellow, that Mosyef."

"They say Lukashka is in town," said one young girl.

"He and Nazarka are spreeing it at Yamka's. They say they have drunk a whole gallon."

Yamka was a dissolute, unmarried Cossack woman who kept a dramshop.

"That 's just the Urvan's luck!" said some one. "Truly he 's the Urvan! Fact! he 's a fine young fellow! shrewd! Truly he 's a fine lad! And so was his father before him, batyaka Kiryak; he 's just like his father. When he was killed the whole stanitsa mourned for him. See! there they are coming now!" continued the speaker, pointing to three Cossacks who were walking toward them down the street. "That Yergushof has been drinking with them. What a tippler he is!"

Lukashka, Nazarka, and Yergushof, all of whom had been drinking heavily, came up to the girls. Their faces were redder than usual, especially the old Cossack's. Yergushof was staggering along, and, all the time laughing noisily, was punching Nazarka in the ribs.

"Say, you wenches, won't you give us a song?" cried one of them to the girls. "I say, you sing, for our spree!"

"How are you to-day? How are you to-day?" exclaimed the women, giving them welcome.

"The idea of singing! It is n't a holiday, is it?" asked one of the women. "You are full; sing yourself!"

Yergushof burst into a laugh and punched Nazarka. "You sing, will you? And I 'll sing too. I 'm a fine hand at singing, I tell you."

"Well, you pretty girls, are you all asleep?" exclaimed Nazarka. "We have come in from the cordon to have a celebration;[1] we have been drinking to Lukashka's good luck!"

[1] *Pomolit'*, in the Cossack's language, signifies to drink a toast in any one's honor or to offer one's congratulations. As a general thing it is em-

Lukashka, joining the group, slowly pushed back his Cossack cap and stood before the girls. His wide cheeks and his neck were red. He stood there talking in a low tone, gravely; but in the deliberation and dignity of his motions there was more life and strength than in Nazarka's chatter and bustle. He reminded one of a sportive stallion, which, raising his tail and snorting, stands as if his feet were all buried in the ground. Lukashka stood quietly in front of the girls; his eyes were full of merriment; he said little, but glanced now at his drunken comrades, now at the girls.

When Maryana came to the corner, he raised his cap with a slow, deliberate motion, moved back a little, and stood in front of her, with one leg slightly advanced, thrusting his thumbs into his belt, and toying with his dagger. Maryana, in reply to his salutation, slowly bent her head, sat down on the terrace, and pulled some melon seeds out from her bosom. Lukashka, not turning his eyes away, gazed at her, and, cracking a seed between his teeth, spat out the shell. All were silent when Maryana joined them.

"Well, have you come for a long stay?" asked one of the women, breaking the silence.

"Till to-morrow," replied Lukashka, gravely.

"Well, then, God grant you good fortune!" exclaimed the Cossack. "I am glad, as I was just saying."

"And so say I," replied the drunken Yergushof, laughing. "So we have some strangers here, have we?" he added, pointing to a soldier who was passing by. "Soldiers' vodka is good; I like it!"

"They sent three of their devils to us," said one of the Cossack women. "My old man went to our head man, but they say there's nothing to be done about it."

"Aha! it bothers you, does it?" asked Yergushof.

"Do they smoke everything up with their tobacco?" asked another Cossack woman. "Let 'em smoke as much in the yard as they please, but I won't have it in the house. Not even if the head of the village inter-

ployed in the sense of "getting drunk." It means literally, to say one's prayers. — AUTHOR'S NOTE.

fered would I allow it. And, then, they will steal. You see the head of the stanitsa, son of a devil that he is, won't take any of them in!"

"It's plain you don't like 'em," said Yergushof again.

"And, then, they say, too, that the order has been given for the girls to make the beds for the soldiers and give them red wine and honey!" said Nazarka, imitating Lukashka's attitude, and also in the same way pushing his hat back on the back of his head.

Yergushof, bursting into a loud laugh, seized and hugged the girl who sat nearest to him. "I believe that's so."

"Now, none of your nonsense," squealed the girl. "I will tell my ma!"

"Tell her!" cried the drunken fellow. "And, faith, Nazarka speaks the truth. It was in the circular; he knows enough to read it. Fact!" And he tried to hug another of the maidens, in regular sequence.

"What are you up to, you rascal?" laughingly exclaimed the moon-faced, rosy Ustenka, giving him a push.

The Cossack staggered back and almost fell.

"There, they pretend that girls have no strength; she nearly knocked me down!"

"There, now, you rascal! the devil brought you from the cordon," exclaimed Ustenka, and, as she turned away from him, she laughed like a colt. "So you were asleep when the abrek came! He might have cut you off, and it would have been good riddance."

"You'd have howled, though!" exclaimed Nazarka, with a laugh.

"Yes, just as I should have cried for you!"

"There, you see she has n't any heart! Would she have cried for you, Nazarka, hey?" remarked Yergushof.

Lukashka all this time was gazing silently at Maryanka. His steady gaze evidently confused the girl.

"Well, Maryanka, I hear they have quartered one of the officers with you," said he, moving nearer to her.

Maryanka, as usual, did not instantly reply, but slowly lifted her eyes to the Cossack. Lukashka's eyes had a

gleam of a smile in them as if something out of the ordinary and apart from the others were passing between him and the maiden.

"Yes, it is all right for them, as they have two cottages," said an old woman, taking the word out of Maryanka's mouth. "But there, the Fomushkins have had to take one of the officers, and they say they had to give him their best room, and they have n't any place left for their own family. Did you ever hear of such a thing! — quartering a whole horde of them in the stanitsa! What are you going to do about it?" said she. "And what a black plague they bring on us!"

"They say they are going to build a bridge across the Terek," said one of the girls.

"And I was told," interrupted Nazarka, going up to Ustenka, "that they are going to dig a well and bury you girls in it, because you won't love these young lads."

And again he made his favorite bow and scrape, at which they all laughed; and Yergushof immediately began to hug the old Cossack woman, passing by Maryanka, though she was next in order.

"Why don't you take Maryanka? She would be the next," said Nazarka.

"Nay, my old woman is sweeter!" cried the Cossack, smacking the old dame, who struggled to escape.

"He 's choking me!" cried she, with a laugh.

The measured tread of footsteps at the end of the street interrupted the laughter. Three soldiers, in overcoats, with rifles over their shoulders, were on their way to relieve the guard over the regimental chest. The corporal, an old cavalryman, looked sternly at the Cossacks, and led the soldiers in such a way as to oblige Lukashka and Nazarka to make room. Nazarka stepped aside, but Lukashka only blinked his eyes, turned his head and his broad back, and did not stir from the place.

"When people are standing, you can turn out," he muttered, shaking his head contemptuously toward the soldiers.

The soldiers silently marched by, keeping step along the dusty road.

Maryana laughed, and so did all the other girls.

"Eki! what smart boys!" said Nazarka. "Just like long-skirted choir-singers!" and he started to march down the street, in imitation of their manner.

Once more the crowd burst into a laugh. Lukashka slowly walked up to Maryana.

"And where is your officer lodged?" he asked.

Maryana deliberated.

"He has been put into the new room," said she.

"Say, is he young or old?" demanded Lukashka, sitting down near the girl.

"Well, do you suppose I have asked him?" replied the girl. "I went to get some red wine for him, and saw him sitting in the window talking with Uncle Yeroshka; a reddish-looking fellow. And he brought a whole cart-load of things."

And she dropped her eyes.

"How glad I am that I had a chance to come in from the cordon!" exclaimed Lukashka, moving nearer along the terrace toward the girl, and looking straight into her eyes.

"How long can you stay?" asked Maryanka, slightly smiling.

"Till to-morrow. Give me some seeds," he added, stretching out his hand.

Maryana laughed outright and opened the fold of her shirt-bosom.

"Only don't take them all," said she.

"Truly, I was very lonesome without you, by God!" said Luka, in a low, wary whisper, taking the seeds from the girl's bosom; and then, moving still closer to her, he began to whisper something in her ear, with smiling eyes.

"I will not come; that 's the end of it," said Maryana, suddenly, aloud, turning from him. ....

"Truly .... this is what I meant," whispered Lukashka. "By God! Come, Mashenka."

Maryanka shook her head decisively, but still she smiled.

"Sister Maryanka! Hey, sister! Mamuka sends for you to come home to supper," cried Maryanka's younger brother, running up to the group of Cossacks.

"I'm coming," replied the maiden. "You go on, batyushka; I will follow; you go on by yourself."

Lukashka stood up and straightened his hat. "I see it's time for me to be going home; that's the better way," said he, pretending to be indifferent, but finding it hard to repress a smile; and he disappeared around the corner of the house.

Meantime, night had entirely settled down upon the stanitsa. The bright stars were scattered over the dark sky. The streets were dark and empty. Nazarka stood with the Cossack women on the terrace, and their laughter was still heard. Lukashka, going with a light step from the girls, turned like a cat, and, holding his rattling dagger, suddenly began to run noiselessly, not in the direction of his home, but toward the ensign's house. After he had run along two streets, he turned into a side street, and, gathering up his cherkeska, sat down on the ground in the shadow of the fence.

"What a girl the ensign's daughter is!" he said to himself, thinking of Maryanka. "The devil—she isn't willing to have a little fun! Well, the time will come!"

The steps of a woman approaching interrupted his thoughts. He listened and laughed to himself. Maryana, with her head bent, came straight toward him with quick and even steps, letting her switch clatter against the palings of the fence.

Lukashka stood up. Maryanka was startled, and stopped short.

"There, you cursed devil! You frightened me! So you did not go home, after all," said she, with a merry laugh.

Lukashka threw one arm around the girl, and with the other hand took her by the face. "What was I going to say to you?.... By God!"....

His voice trembled and broke.

"What kind of talk is this for the night!" replied

Maryana. "Mamuka is waiting. You go to your dushenka!"

And, freeing herself from him, she ran a few steps away. When she reached the hedge that separated her own yard from the street, she paused and turned to the Cossack, who had run alongside of her, still trying to persuade her to stay a little while with him.

"Well, what is it you want to say, you owl?" and again she laughed.

"Don't make sport of me, Maryana. By God! What if I have a dushenka? The devil take her! Only say the word and I will love you so! I will do anything you wish. Do you hear?"— And he jingled the coins in his pocket. —"We will have a jolly life. Men enjoy themselves, and why should n't I? You don't give me any joy at all, Maryanushka!"

The girl made no reply, but stood in front of him, and, with quick-moving fingers, broke her switch into little fragments.

Lukashka suddenly doubled his fists and set his teeth.

"Yes, and why should we be always waiting and waiting? Don't I love you, matushka? Do with me what you please," said he, suddenly, frowning wrathfully and seizing both of her hands.

Maryana did not change the calm expression of her face and voice.

"Don't get excited, Lukashka, but hear what I have to say," she replied, not withdrawing her hands, but pushing the Cossack a little from her. ...."Of course, I am a girl, but you listen to me. It is not for me to say, but if you love me, then, this is what I will tell you. Let go of my hands and I will tell you. I will marry you, but you must not expect any follies from me — never," said Maryanka, looking him straight in the face.

"Why get married? Marriage is not in our power. No, I want you to love me, Maryanushka," said Lukashka, his gloomy and excited mood, by an abrupt change, once more becoming sweet, complaisant, and affectionate, while he looked close into her eyes and smiled.

Maryana pressed close to him and gave him a hearty kiss on the lips.

"You dear fellow," she whispered impetuously, drawing him to herself.

Then, suddenly tearing herself away, she started to run, and, without looking around, darted into her own gate.

Notwithstanding the Cossack's entreaties to wait just one minute more, and hear what he had to say, Maryana did not stop.

"Go away! We shall be seen!" she said imperatively. "There is that devil of a lodger, I think, walking in the yard."

"Oh, you girl!"[1] said Lukashka to himself. "You want to be married, do you? Marriage is well enough, but only love me!"

He found Nazarka at Yamka's, and, after drinking awhile with him, he went to Dunyashka and spent the night with her in spite of her unfaithfulness.

CHAPTER XIV

Olyenin was really walking in the yard at the time when Maryanka came into the gate, and he had heard what she said about "that devil of a lodger."

All that evening he had spent with Uncle Yeroshka on the steps of his new domicile. He had ordered a table, the samovar, the wine, and a lighted candle to be brought out, and, over a glass of tea and his cigar, he had listened to the tales told by the old man, who was sitting at his feet, on one of the steps. Although the air was calm, the candle flickered and the flame bent this way and that, lighting up now the pillar of the porch, now the table and the tea service, now the old man's white, closely cropped head.

Night-moths fluttered about, scattering the dust from their wings as they dashed against the table and the

[1] *Khorunzhikha;* literally, daughter of a *khorunzhy*, or ensign in the Cossack cavalry.

glasses; now they flew through the flame of the candle, now they disappeared in the blackness outside of the circle of the light.

Olyenin and Yeroshka had drunk together five bottles of chikhir. Every time the old man filled his glass, he held it up to Olyenin, drank to his health, and talked without relaxation. He told about the former life of the Cossacks, about his father, the Broad, who carried single-handed on his shoulders the carcass of a wild boar weighing three hundred and sixty pounds, and used to drink at one sitting more than twenty quarts of chikhir. He told about the days of his prime, and about his nyanya,[1] Girchik, with whom, at the time of the plague, he had brought burkas from the other side of the Terek. He told about his hunting, and how one morning he had killed two stags. He told about his dushenka, who used to come out at night to see him at the cordon.

And his whole narration was so eloquent and animated that Olyenin did not observe how time was passing.

"But you see, my dear sir,"[2] said he, "you did not know me at my golden time; I'd have shown you everything. To-day Yeroshka 'has licked the pot,' but then Yeroshka's fame rang through the whole army. Who had the best horse? Who had a Gurda[3] saber? Who used to be sought for drinking-bouts? Who was sent to the mountains to kill Akhmet-Khan? Always Yeroshka! Whom did the girl like? Always and forever Yeroshka! Because I was a genuine jigit. Carouser, brigand, skilful in driving the herds down from the mountains! a singer! I could turn my hand to anything. Even to-day there 's not a Cossack equal to me. It makes me sick to see them. About so tall," — Yeroshka raised his hand a yard or so above the ground, — "they wear fools' boots, and if they can get any one to look at them they are happy. Or if they

[1] *N'yan'ya* signifies in its obvious sense always an older sister, but is employed metaphorically as a friend. — AUTHOR'S NOTE.

[2] *Atyets tui moï*, literally, Father thou mine.

[3] The sabers and daggers prized above all others in the Caucasus are called after the name of the manufacturer, Gurda. — AUTHOR'S NOTE.

get drunk, they feel all puffed up; and they don't drink like men, but like I don't know what. But who was I? I was Yeroshka, the brigand; I was better known in the mountains than in the stanitsas. The mountain princes came to see me as friends; I was kunak[1] with them all. I was Tartar to Armenians, soldier or officer .... it was all the same to me, provided only he could drink. 'You must keep yourself pure from communication with the world,' says he. 'Drink not with a soldier; eat not with a Tartar.'"

"Who said that?" asked Olyenin.

"Oh, our head men. Now just listen to a Tartar mulla or kadi. He will say, 'You unbelieving giaours, why do ye eat pork?' Of course every one has his own customs. But, in my opinion, it's all one. God made everything for man's enjoyment. There's no sin in anything. Now just take the wild beast, for instance. He lives in the Tartar reeds and in ours. Wherever he goes he is at home. Whatever God gives he devours. But our people say that we shall lick the frying-pan if we do that. I think that all that is false," he added, after a pause.

"What is false?"

"Why, what the head men say. My dear sir, there used to be with us in the Chervlenaya an army leader .... he was my kunak. He was just the same sort of bravo that I was. He was killed on the Chechnya. He used to say that the priests get all such things out of their own heads. 'You will die,' he used to say, 'and the grass will grow over you, and that's all there is of it.'" — The old man laughed.— "He was a desperate fellow."

"How old are you?" asked Olyenin.

"Ah, but God knows that. Must be about seventy. We had a tsaritsa when I was a little lad. Now you can reckon it up how much that makes me — about seventy, does n't it?"

"That's so, and you're still a bravo."

"Well, thank God, I'm sound, sound all through; only a woman, a witch, spoiled it all for me." ....

[1] Guest-friend.

"How was that?"

"Yes, she spoiled it so that...."

"When you die the grass will grow over you?" asked Olyenin, repeating his words.

Yeroshka evidently did not care to express his thought clearly. He was silent for a little.

"Well, how do you suppose it was? Drink!" he cried, smiling, and filling his glass again.

CHAPTER XV

"Let us see; what was I talking about?" he continued, trying to collect his thoughts. "This is the kind of a man that I am. I am a huntsman. There's not a huntsman to be compared with me in the whole army. I will find and show you every sort of animal, every kind of bird, and how and where it lives — I know it all. I have dogs and two fowling-pieces and nets and decoys and a falcon; I have everything, thank the Lord. If you are a real huntsman and not a mere boaster, I will show you all about it. That's the kind of man that I am. I will find the trail of a wild beast — I know it already. I know where he comes to his lair and where he comes to drink or to wallow. I make a 'lopazik,'[1] and there I sit and watch the whole night long; why should I stay at home? At home you fall into sin, you get drunk. The women are always buzzing around there, helter-skelter; the children are screeching. You are choked with charcoal smoke. It's quite another thing to go and watch; you select a nice little place, you stamp down the rushes, and there you sit and wait — good fellow that you are! And you come to know everything that takes place in the woods. You look at the sky. The stars pass over; you follow them and judge what time of the night it is. You gaze around you. The forest stirs, and, as you wait, you hear a crashing; it's a boar come to roll in the mire! You

[1] *Lopazik* means the place where one sits in waiting on a scaffolding or a tree. — Author's Note.

hear the young eagles scream, or the cocks in the village answering one another, or the geese. When you hear the geese, it means it's midnight. And I know all about such things. And then a gun goes off somewhere in the distance, and that sets you to thinking. You ask yourself, 'Who fired that? Was it a Cossack like me? Was he waiting for a wild beast, and did he hit him, or did he merely wound him, and will the poor thing rush into the reeds to roll in his blood, and all for nothing? I don't like it, okh! I don't like it! Why lame a poor beast? Fool! fool!' Or you say to yourself, 'Can it be that an abrek has shot some stupid little Cossack?' All these thoughts go through your head. And then once I was watching down by the river, and I saw a cradle floating down-stream, perfectly whole, only the rim a little broken. Then the thought came: 'Whose cradle is that? Some of your devilish soldiers,' I say to myself, 'must have been at a Chechen aul, carried off the women, and some devil killed the baby: caught him by the leg, dashed him into a corner! That's the way they do it, is n't it? Ekh! men have no hearts.' When such thoughts came to me I felt sorry. I say to myself, 'They threw away the cradle and carried off the mother and burnt the house, but the jigit took his gun, and he will come over to our side to plunder.' And so you sit and think. And then, as you are listening, a little drove of pigs breaks through the thicket, and something in you throbs and throbs. 'Come on, my darlings![1] They will get scent of you,' you say to yourself, and you sit and don't stir, but your heart goes, 'Dun, dun, dun.' Then the drove comes into sight. This very spring such a splendid drove came along, the ground was black with them. 'To the Father and the Son!'.... I was just going to shoot. Then she sniffed and called to her little pigs, 'Children, look out! there's danger; a man sits there on the watch!' and the whole drove rushed off into the bushes. How vexatious it was, when you felt as if you were already biting into one of them!"

[1] *Matushki*, little mothers.

"How did the sow tell her little pigs that a man was on the watch?" asked Olyenin.

"And how do you suppose? You have an idea that a wild beast is a fool. No, he is wiser than a man, even though he is called pig. He knows everything. Take this for example. A man comes across a trail and does not notice it, but a hog, as soon as he stumbles on your track, snuffs, and makes off; that means that he's clever; he knows that you haven't sensed him, but he has you. And that is equivalent to saying, 'You want to kill me, but I prefer to wander about the forest alive.' You have your laws and he has his as well. He's a hog, but, for all that, he's no worse than you are, is just as much one of God's creatures. Ekh ma! Man is stupid, stupid! man is stupid!" reiterated the old huntsman, and, dropping his head, he sank into thought.

Olyenin also pondered, and, getting up from the steps, he went down and began silently to walk up and down the yard, with his hands behind his back.

Yeroshka, suddenly rousing, raised his head and began attentively to look at the night-moths, which were attracted by the flickering candle-flame and falling into it.

"Little fool! Fool!" he muttered. "Where did you fly from? Dura! dura!"

He got up, and, with his huge fingers, began to drive away the moths. "You will burn yourself, you little fool;[1] here, fly this way, there's room enough," he said, in his affectionate voice, trying to lift one tenderly by the wings in his clumsy fingers, and to let it go. "You are ruining yourself, and I am sorry for you."

He sat there long, chattering, and taking an occasional drink from the bottle, while Olyenin walked back and forth through the yard. Suddenly a whispering on the other side of the fence attracted his attention. Involuntarily holding his breath, he caught the sound of a woman's laugh, a man's voice, and the sound of kisses. Purposely scuffling his feet on the grass, he went across to the other side of the yard.

[1] *Durotchka*, diminutive of *dura*, which is feminine of *durak*, a fool or idiot.

In a short time the gate creaked. A Cossack, in a dark cherkeska and with a white lambskin cap, went along by the fence — it was Luka — and a tall woman in a white kerchief passed by Olyenin.

Maryanka's deliberate pace seemed to say, "I have nothing to do with you, and you have nothing to do with me." His eyes followed her to the porch of the Cossack cottage; through the window he saw how she took off her kerchief and sat down on the bench. And suddenly a feeling of painful loneliness, of indefinite longings and hopes, and a certain degree of envy toward some one took hold of the young man's soul.

The last lights were extinguished in the cottages. The last sounds died away in the stanitsa. And the hedges, and the dim forms of the cattle in the yards, and the roofs of the houses, and the graceful poplars, — everything seemed to be asleep with the healthy, gentle sleep of weariness. Only the incessant piping of the frogs came to the attentive ear from the distant swamps. In the East the stars were less abundant and seemed to be melting away in the increasing light. Overhead they came out from more distant depths and more abundantly. The old Yeroshka, leaning his head on his hand, was beginning to doze. A cock crowed in the opposite yard. But Olyenin kept walking back and forth, busy with his thoughts. The sound of voices singing in chorus came to his ears. He went down to the fence and listened. Young Cossacks were trolling a gay song, and one young voice was heard above the others by reason of its forceful clearness.

"Do you know who that is singing?" asked the old man, rousing from his nap. "That's Lukashka, the jigit. He has killed a Chechenets. And so he's having a spree. But is that anything to rejoice over? Fool, fool!"

"But you have killed men?" asked Olyenin.

The old man suddenly lifted himself on both elbows and brought his face close to Olyenin's. "You devil!" he cried. "What are you asking? It must not be spoken of. It is strange, okh! strange to kill a human

being! Good night, my friend;[1] I am full and contented," said he, getting up. "Shall I take you hunting to-morrow?"

"Certainly."

"See that you are up early! If you oversleep.... there 'll be a fine!"

"Never you fear; I shall be up before you are," replied Olyenin.

The old man went off. The song had ceased. Footsteps and merry talking were heard. After a little the song broke forth again, but farther away, and Yeroshka's loud voice joined the other voices.

"What men! what a life!" thought Olyenin, sighing; and he went back alone to his cottage.

CHAPTER XVI

Uncle Yeroshka was not in active service, and he lived alone. Twenty years before, his wife had deserted him, and, after being baptized into the Orthodox communion, had married a Russian sergeant-major. He had no children. It was no idle boast when he declared that in old times he had been the first bravo in the stanitsa. Among all the Cossacks he was famous for his old-fashioned bravery. The death of more than one Chechenets and of more than one Russian was on his soul. He used to make forays in the mountains, and he had also stolen from the Russians, and twice he had been put in the guard-house. The larger part of his life had been spent in hunting in the forest, where he often subsisted for whole days on a crust of bread, drinking nothing but water. But when he came back to the village he was tippling from morning till night.

After he went home from Olyenin's he slept for a couple of hours, and then, waking some time before daylight, he lay on his bed and tried to form a judgment about the man whose acquaintance he had made the evening before. He was much pleased with Olye-

[1] *Prashchaï, atyets moï:* Farewell, my father.

nin's *simplicity*, but he understood by simplicity his generosity with the wine. And Olyenin himself pleased him. He wondered why the Russians were all *simple* and rich, and why they knew nothing at all and yet were all so learned. He thought over all these questions, and wondered what he might get out of Olyenin.

Uncle Yeroshka's cottage was tolerably large and not old, but the absence of a woman's hand was very noticeable in it. The Cossacks are usually very scrupulous about neatness, but his whole apartment was filthy and in the greatest disorder. On the table were flung his blood-stained coat, a half of a cake, and next to it a plucked and torn jackdaw, kept for his hawk to eat. Scattered about on the benches lay his porshni, a gun, a dagger, a bag, wet garments, and rags. In the corner, in a tub full of dirty, ill-smelling water, another pair of porshni were soaking; there also stood a carbine and a pheasant-lure. On the dirty floor were thrown a net and a few dead pheasants, and a pullet, fastened by its leg, was wandering about, picking up what she could find. In the cold oven stood a broken jug, filled with some sort of milk-like liquid. On the oven sat a screaming falcon, trying to tear itself away from its cord, and on the edge quietly sat a moulting hawk, looking askance at the pullet, and occasionally tipping his head to one side or the other.

Uncle Yeroshka himself, in a single shirt, lay on his back on his short bed, placed between the wall and the oven, so that he could brace his solid legs on the latter, and his clumsy fingers were engaged in picking off the scabs on the scratches made on his hands by the hawk, which he had carried without gloves. The air of the whole room, and especially the corner where the old man lay, was filled with that strong but not disagreeable conglomeration of odors which the old man carried about him.

"*Uidye-ma, dyadya?*" — that is, "Are you at home, uncle?" — he heard a clear voice saying through the window, and he instantly recognized it as the voice of his neighbor Lukashka.

"*Uidye, uidye, uidye.* Yes, come in," cried the old man. "Neighbor Marka, Luka Marka, have you come to see your uncle? On your way to the cordon?"

The hawk was alarmed at the voices, flapped its wings, and tugged at its leash.

The old man was fond of Lukashka; he was almost the only one whom he excepted from the general contempt in which he held all the younger generation of Cossacks. Moreover, Lukashka and his mother, who were neighbors of his, often gave him from their larder wine, curds, and other things which Yeroshka lacked. Uncle Yeroshka, who all his life long had followed his own inclinations, always explained his impulses in the most practical way. "Well, why not?" he would reason with himself. "They are well-to-do. I will bring them fresh pork or a fowl, and they will not forget their uncle. A pie or a cake they will give me occasionally."

"How are you, Marka? Glad to see you!" merrily shouted the old man, and with a quick motion set down his feet from the bed, leaped up, took a step or two over the creaking floor, glanced at his bare, crooked legs, and suddenly something seemed to amuse him in the sight of them. He burst into a laugh, stamped with his bare toes once and then again, and executed a shuffle.

"Some skill, hey?" he asked, his little eyes sparkling.

Lukashka barely smiled.

"Well, are you on your way to the cordon?" asked the old man.

"I've brought you the red wine, uncle, which I promised you."

"Christ be your salvation!" replied the old man; he picked up his leggings and beshmet from the floor, put them on, tightened his belt, poured a little water from a crock over his hands, rubbed them on his old leggings, ran a piece of a comb through his beard, and then stood before Lukashka.

"All ready!" said he.

Lukashka got a dipper, wiped it, filled it with wine, and, setting it on a stool, brought it to the old man.

"Here's to your health! To the Father and the Son!" said Uncle Yeroshka, taking the wine with triumphal solemnity. "May all your wishes be realized! may you be a bravo! may you get your cross!"

Lukashka, muttering a prayer, also drank, and set the wine on the table. The old man got up, fetched a dried fish, laid it on the threshold, beat it with a stick so as to soften it, and then, with his shriveled hands, he put it in his one blue plate, and set it on the table.

"I always have something for a bite, thank God!" he exclaimed proudly. "Well, how about Mosyef?" he asked, changing the subject.

Lukashka told him how the sergeant had taken the gun from him, and evidently wanted the old man's opinion.

"Don't stand on the matter of the gun; if you don't give it up, you won't get your reward."

"Yes, but what difference does that make, uncle? They will say, 'What reward should we give to a green lad?'[1] But the gun was splendid, a Crimean one, worth eighty rubles."

"Eh! let it go! I had such a quarrel once with a captain; he asked me for my horse. 'Give me your horse,' says he, 'and I will make you an ensign.' I did n't let him have it, and so got nothing myself."

"But see here, uncle, I must buy me a horse, and they say that I can't get one on the other side of the river for less than fifty silver rubles. And mother has n't sold the wine yet."

"Ekh! we did n't lay it to heart," exclaimed the old man. "When Uncle Yeroshka was your age he had already got a whole herd from the Nogaï and driven them across the Terek. I'd always sell a good horse for three pints of vodka or for a felt cloak."

"What made you sell so cheap?"

"Fool, fool! Marka!" exclaimed the old man, contemptuously. "You could n't help it; what made you steal horses unless to keep from growing stingy! But

[1] Green lad: *malolyetka* means a Cossack not yet enrolled in the actual cavalry service. — AUTHOR'S NOTE.

I reckon you never have seen horses stolen..... Why don't you speak?"

"What should I say, uncle?" exclaimed Lukashka. "It seems that we are not such men as you were."

"Fool! fool! Marka! Not such men!" rejoined the old man, mimicking the young Cossack. "No, no such Cossack was I when I was of your age!"

"But how was it?" asked Lukashka.

The old man contemptuously shook his head.

"Uncle Yeroshka was simple; he wasted no time in regrets. And that was the reason all the Chechnya was 'hail fellow well met'[1] with me. If any kunak came to see me, we got drunk together on vodka; I'd make him happy, I'd take him home with me to sleep, and when I went to see him, I'd always get a gift: *peshkesh*, they called it. That's the way men do, but it's all different now; it's only childish fun, cracking seeds and spitting out the shells!" said the old man, scornfully, in conclusion, imitating the way the Cossacks of the present day crunch melon seeds and spit out the shells.

"Yes, I know it; that's so," said Lukashka.

"You want to be a bravo; then be a jigit and not a muzhik! The muzhik buys horses and hands over his money, but there are other ways of getting horses!"

They were both silent.

"But it is so dull, uncle, in the stanitsa and at the cordon; you can't go anywhere to have some sport. Everybody is timid! Take Nazar for example. The other day we were at an aul. Girei-Khan invited us to go with him to the Nogaï after horses; but no one would go, and how could I go alone?"

"But here's your uncle; what's he for? Do you think that I am dead wood? No, I am not dead wood! Give me a horse and I will ride off to the Nogaï."

"Why this idle talk?" exclaimed Luka. "Tell me how to act with Girei-Khan. He says, 'Only just bring one horse down to the Terek, and if you go with me you shall have a whole stud!' He's so wily-looking it's hard to have any confidence in him."

[1] *Kunaki.*

"You can trust Gireï-Khan; all his family are good men; his father was a faithful kunak of mine. Only heed your uncle, I won't give you any bad advice: make him take an oath, then you can trust him; but if you go off with him, have your pistol ready, especially when you come to divide the horses. Once a Chechenets came within an ace of killing me: I asked him ten rubles for a horse. Trust him certainly; but don't go to sleep without your gun!"

Lukashka listened attentively to what the old man said.

"Well, uncle, they say you have a magic herb. Is that so?" asked the young Cossack, after a pause.

"No such thing, but I will teach you how to get one; you're a fine young fellow, won't forget your uncle. Shall I tell you?"

"Tell me, uncle!"

"You know what a tortoise is? Well, she's a devil, the tortoise is!"

"Of course I know what a tortoise is!"

"Well, then, find her nest and plait a little hedge around it so that she can't get through it. Then she will come, will go round it and then back again; then she will find the magic herb, will bring it and will break the hedge. Then you must go the next morning and look; where it was broken you'll find your magic herb lying. Take it and carry it wherever you please. No lock and no wall can keep you!"

"Did you ever try it, uncle?"

"No, never tried it myself, but good people say so. I only used to have a charm beginning 'all hail,' which I used to repeat when I mounted my horse. No one ever killed me!"

"What was this 'all hail' charm, uncle?"

"You don't know it? Ekh! what people! Only ask your uncle! Now, listen and repeat it after me:—

"'*Zdravstvuïtya zhivuchi v Sioni.*
Se Tsar tvoï.
Mui syadem na konya.
Sofoniye vopiye.

Zakhariye glagolye.
Otche Mandruiche.
Chelovyeko-vyeko-liubche.'"[1]

"Vyeko-vyeko-liubche," repeated the old man. "Do you get it? Well, then, repeat it!"

Lukashka laughed.

"Do you mean to say, uncle, that that's the reason they did n't kill you? Is it possible!"

"Oh, you 've cut your wisdom teeth! You just learn it and always repeat it. It won't do any harm. Well, now, then, sing 'Mandriche' and get along all right," and the old man himself laughed. "But don't go to the Nogaï, Luka; don't go, that's what I say."

"Why not?"

"It is n't the time, and you are n't the kind to go! You Cossacks are regular muckers. Then, besides, they have brought the Russians here. They would bring you into court. Truly, give it up. What do you want? Once Girchik and I...."

And the old man went on to tell one of his never ending stories. But Lukashka glanced out of the window.

"It's broad daylight, uncle," he exclaimed, interrupting him. "I must go; come and see us sometime!"

"Christ save us! I must go to the army man; I promised to take him out hunting. He seems like a fine fellow."

CHAPTER XVII

From Yeroshka's Lukashka went home. As he walked along, a damp misty vapor was rising from the ground and enveloping the stanitsa. The cattle, unseen, began to stir in the various yards. The cocks crowed more noisily and more frequently. The atmosphere became more transparent, and the people were beginning to arise. As he came nearer, Lukashka saw the

[1] "All hail, ye inhabitants of Zion. Behold your Tsar. We sit on horseback. The cries of Sophonius. The words of Zakhar. Father Mandriche, the lover-over of man."

hedge of his own yard, wet with mist, and the little porch of the cottage, and the open gate. The sound of some one splitting wood was heard in the yard. Lukashka went into the cottage. His mother was already up, and was standing in front of the oven, throwing kindling-wood into it. His little sister was still asleep on the bed.

"Well, Lukashka, are you through with your spree?" asked his mother, gently. "Where were you last night?"

"I was in the stanitsa," replied Lukashka, reluctantly, while he took his carbine out of its case and examined it.

The mother shook her head.

After putting some powder on the pan, Lukashka got down a pouch, took out a number of empty shells, and began to fill cartridges, carefully ramming down the bullet wrapped in a rag. If there happened to be too much, he bit it off with his teeth, and, after examining his work, put up the pouch.

"Well, matushka, I told you to mend my bag; have you done it?" said he.

"I reckon so. The dumb girl was mending something last evening. But must you go right back to the cordon? I have not seen you at all."

"Well, I've only just come, but I must go back," replied Lukashka, tying up his powder. "Where is the dumb girl? Has she gone out?"

"Certainly; she's splitting wood. She has been greatly distressed about you. 'Here, I shall not have a chance to see him at all,' she said. Then she pointed with her hand to her face, clucked her tongue, and then pressed her hand against her heart; it was pitiful to see, indeed it was. Shall I go and fetch her, hey? And she understood all about the abrek."

"Fetch her," said Lukashka. "And I must have some tallow there with me; bring me some. I want to grease my saber."

The old woman went out, and in a few minutes came Lukashka's deaf and dumb sister over the creaking boards into the cottage. She was six years his elder

and would have borne a remarkable resemblance to him had it not been for the stupid and coarsely stolid expression of face characteristic of the deaf and dumb. Her dress consisted of a coarse, patched shirt; her feet were bare and dirty; she wore an old blue kerchief on her head. Her neck, hands, and face were as muscular as a muzhik's. By her dress and all it was evident that she had always been used to hard manual labor. She lugged an armful of wood and threw it down by the oven. Then she went to her brother with a smile of joy, which wrinkled up her whole face, patted him on the shoulder, and began, with her hands, her face, and all her body, to make him rapid signs.

"Good, good! Fine girl, Stepka!" replied the brother, nodding his head. "You have done finely; you have mended it well. Here is something for you."

He drew out of his pocket two pieces of gingerbread and gave them to her.

Stepka's face flushed, and she made a strange, wild noise, expressive of her joy. Seizing the gingerbread, she again began to make signs, even more rapidly than before, pointing frequently in one direction and drawing her stout finger over her brows and face. Lukashka understood her and kept nodding his head, with a slight smile. She meant that her brother gave the girls good things to eat; she meant that the girls all liked him, and that one girl — Maryanka — was better than the rest, and that she loved him. She indicated Maryanka by pointing quickly in the direction of her house, then to her eyebrows and her face, smacking her lips and shaking her head. She signified "love" by pressing her hand to her bosom, kissing her hand, and pretending to hug some one. The mother came back into the room, and, perceiving what the dumb girl was trying to talk about, smiled and shook her head. Stepka showed her the gingerbread, and again squealed with joy.

"I had a talk with Dame Ulitka the other day; I told her I was going to send the match-makers," said the mother. "She took my suggestion very kindly."

Lukashka looked at his mother without speaking.

"What for, matushka? You must sell the wine; I need a horse."

"I will dispose of it when the time comes; I am mending the casks," said the mother, evidently resenting it that her son meddled with her domestic arrangements. "When you go away," she went on to say, "then take the bag that 's in the entry. I have borrowed of friends, and put up some provisions for you at the cordon. Will you put it in your sakvui?"[1]

"Excellent," rejoined Lukashka. "Now, if Gireĭ-Khan should come across the river, send him to the cordon, since they won't give me leave of absence for a long time to come. I have some business with him."

"I will send him, Lukashka, I will send him. What makes you always waste your time at Yamka's?" asked the old mother. "Last night, when I got up to go out to the cattle, I listened, and I thought I heard your voice singing a song."

Lukashka made no reply. He went into the entry, threw the saddle-bags over his shoulder, flung his coat over them, took his gun, and paused on the threshold.

"Good-by, matushka," said he to his mother, as he closed the gate behind him. "Send a little cask by Nazarka; I promised some to the boys. He will come after it."

"Christ save you, Lukashka! God be with you! I will send it; I will send some from the new cask," replied the old woman, coming down to the hedge. "Listen to me," she added, leaning over the hedge.

The Cossack paused.

"You have had your spree here. Well, glory to God! Why should n't a young man enjoy himself? For it was God Himself who gave you good luck. That is good. But still just see here, my dear son, don't carry it to excess; above all, be obedient to your superior officer — one must! And I will send the wine and I

[1] *Sakvui* means the double sack, or bag, which the Cossacks carry behind their saddles. — AUTHOR'S NOTE.

will get you money enough for a horse, and I will have the girl betrothed to you."

"Very good, very good!" replied the son, scowling.

The dumb girl made a noise to attract his attention. She pointed to her head and her hand; that meant, "shaven head — Chechenets." Then, puckering up her eyebrows, she pretended to aim with a gun, squealed, and ended in a queer noise, shaking her head.

She was telling Lukashka to kill another Chechenets. Lukashka understood her, smiled, and, with quick, light steps, and carrying his musket behind his back, under his burka, disappeared in the thick mist.

After standing silently for a moment at the door-sill, the old mother went to her dairy and forthwith began her daily toil.

CHAPTER XVIII

Lukashka started back to the cordon, and Uncle Yeroshka at the same time whistled to his dogs and, crawling through the hedge, went to Olyenin's lodgings by the back way, for when he was going on a hunting expedition he disliked to meet women.

Olyenin was still asleep, and even Vanyusha, who had waked up, was still lying in bed, looking around and wondering if it were time to get up, or not, when Uncle Yeroshka, with his gun slung behind his back and with his hunting apparatus, opened the door.

"A switch! A cane!" he cried, in his bluff voice. "To arms! The Chechens have come! — Ivan! Put on the samovar for your master! And get up! Lively!" he cried. "That 's the way it is with us, my good man! Even the girls are up by this time. Look, look out of the window there; she 's going after water, and here you are asleep!"

Olyenin woke up and leaped out of bed. And how pleasant and jolly it was to see the old man and to hear his voice!

"Lively! lively there, Vanyusha!" he cried.

"And this is the way you go hunting! People have had their breakfast, but you are asleep! Lyam! where are you?" he shouted to the dog.

"Is your gun all ready? Hey?" shouted the old man, making as much noise as if a whole troop were in the cottage.

"Well, I am to blame for not having done a single thing. Powder, Vanyusha! and the gun-wads!" exclaimed Olyenin.

"A fine!" cried the old man.

"*Du té voulevou?*" asked Vanyusha, laughing.

"You are n't one of us; you don't talk in our language, you devil!" cried the old man, showing the roots of his teeth at Vanyusha.

"This is the first offense; you must let me off," laughed Olyenin, as he drew on his great boots.

"Excused the first time," replied Yeroshka; "but, if you sleep late a second time, you will have to pay a fine of a gallon of chikhir. After the heat of the day begins, you won't see any more stags."

"And if you find one, even then he will be wiser than we men, I suppose," said Olyenin, quoting the old man's words of the evening before. "You won't get him by trickery."

"Oh, you 're laughing at me. Kill one first and then talk! Now, lively! Ah, see there! the master of the house is coming to see you," said Yeroshka, looking out of the window. "Ah, see! he 's all dressed up, got on a new zipun, so as to show you that he is an officer! Ekh! what a people! what a people!"

At that moment Vanyusha came to report to his master that the ensign wanted to see him.

"L'arzhan!" said he, significantly, preparing Olyenin for the object of the ensign's visit. A moment after, the ensign himself, in a new cherkeska with an officer's shoulder-straps and in polished boots, — a rare thing among the Cossacks, — came into the room, smiling and swaggering, and offered them the salutations of the day.

Ilya Vasilyevitch, the ensign, was a *cultivated* Cos-

sack; that is, he had been in Russia, was a school-teacher, and, above all, was aristocratic. He was anxious to seem an aristocrat; but it was impossible to avoid the conclusion that, under the fictitious guise of his clumsy polish, his uneasy self-assurance, and his coarse speech, he felt himself just the same as Uncle Yeroshka. It was evident, alike, in his sunburned face and his hands and his purple nose.

Olyenin begged the ensign to be seated.

"Good-morning, Ilya Vasilyevitch," said Yeroshka, standing up and making what seemed to Olyenin an ironically low bow.

"How are you, uncle? You here already?" replied the ensign, giving him a careless nod.

The ensign was a man of forty, with a gray, wedge-shaped beard. He was lean, slender, and handsome, and yet very hearty for his forty years. As he came into Olyenin's presence he was evidently apprehensive lest he should be mistaken for an ordinary Cossack, and was anxious to make his importance instantly felt.

"This is our Egyptian Nimrod," he went on to say, addressing Olyenin with a self-satisfied smile and pointing to the old man. "*A mighty hunter before the Lord.* The first among us in everything. Have you got acquainted with him already?"

Uncle Yeroshka, looking at his legs wrapped up in wet porshni, thoughtfully shook his head, as if in amazement at the ensign's shrewdness and learning, and repeated to himself — "'*Gipshn Nimvrod*' — what does he mean by that?"

"Well, we are going off hunting," said Olyenin.

"That's very good," observed the ensign, "but I have a little business with you."

"What is your pleasure?"

"As you are a nobleman," the ensign began, "and, as I am able to understand it, we both have the rank of officer, and therefore we can gradually and always treat each other as noblemen."

He paused, and glanced with a smile at the old man and the officer.

"Now, if you would only be good enough to talk things over with me, — for my wife is a little dull of comprehension, and she could not quite make out at present what your words of yesterday's date meant. Because I could easily let my lodgings, without stable, for six silver rubles to the adjutant of the regiment; but, as a man of aristocratic birth, I can't think of such a thing as moving permanently out of my rooms. And, since you were very anxious about it, then, as a man having myself the rank of officer, I could very easily have a personal talk with you and come to some agreement, and, as a native of this district, though it is not in accordance with our usual custom, but still in all respects I can comply with the conditions...."

"Very clearly expressed," muttered the old man.

The ensign spoke for some time longer in the same strain. Olyenin, not without some difficulty, was able to make out of it all that the ensign was anxious to obtain six silver rubles a month for his lodgings. He complied with his desire, and offered his guest a glass of tea. The ensign declined.

"According to our stupid customs," he said, "we consider it a sin to use a *worldly* glass. Now, though I, owing to my having had some culture, might be able to understand this, yet my wife, owing to human weakness...."

"Well, will you send for some tea?"

"If you will permit me, I will bring my own glass, my *special* one," replied the ensign, and he went to the steps. "My glass, bring my glass," he cried.

In a few moments the door opened and a sunburned young arm in a pink shirt-sleeve held the glass into the room. The ensign went to the door, took the glass, and whispered a word or two to his daughter. Olyenin filled his visitor's *special* glass; Yeroshka drank out of the *worldly* one.

"However, I do not wish to detain you," said the ensign, burning his lips and making haste to drain the glass. "I have a great fondness for fishing, and I am here just for a little visit as a sort of vacation from my

duties. So I have a desire to try my luck and see if some of the *Terek's gifts* will not fall to my lot. I hope that you will come and visit me sometime and drink a 'brotherly cup,' as we Cossacks call it," he added.

The ensign made a low bow, pressed Olyenin's hand, and went out.

While the young officer was getting ready, he heard the ensign's clear and imperative voice giving directions to his family. Then, in a few minutes, Olyenin saw him, dressed in trousers rolled up to the knees and in a ragged beshmet, go past the window, with his net on his shoulder.

"The cheat!" exclaimed Uncle Yeroshka, drinking his tea from the *worldly* glass. "Tell me, are you going to pay six silver rubles? Who ever heard of such a thing? You can get the best room in the village for two moneta. What a beast! Why, I'll give you mine for three."

"No, I'll stay here where I am," said Olyenin.

"Six silver rubles! what a foolish waste of money! E-ekh!" grunted the old man. "Give me some wine, Ivan!"

After they had taken a bite of breakfast, and drunk some vodka for their journey, Olyenin and the old man went out together into the street. It was about eight o'clock in the morning. In front of the gate they met an arba drawn by oxen. Marya, her face enveloped to the eyes in a white kerchief, wearing a beshmet over her shirt, and with boots on, and with a long stick in her hand, was guiding the oxen by a cord attached to their horns.

"Ah, loveliest!"[1] exclaimed the old man, making believe that he was going to hug her.

Maryanka raised her stick at him, and looked gayly at them both from her handsome eyes.

Olyenin's heart felt lighter than ever.

"Well, come on, come on," he cried, throwing his gun over his shoulder, and feeling the girl's gaze resting on him.

[1] *Mamushka*, little mother.

Maryanka's voice, "Gi! gi!" addressing the oxen, rang out behind them, and immediately the two-wheeled arba started creaking on its way.

Olyenin kept glancing back toward the ox-cart, in which sat the girl, goading on the oxen with her switch. The two huntsmen went along together over the damp herb-grown path. The dogs, wagging their tails and occasionally glancing up at their masters, trotted along by their side. Myriads of gnats darted about them and followed them, covering their backs, their faces, and their hands. The air was redolent of spicy herbage and the dampness of the woods.

The mist had partly lifted, disclosing the wet, thatched roofs, and had partly changed to dew, which wet the paths and grass around the fences. The smoke came pouring out from all the chimneys. The people were starting away from the stanitsa: some to work, some to the river, some to the cordon.

As long as their road ran back of the stanitsa and across the pastures, Yeroshka chattered incessantly. He could not keep the ensign out of his thoughts, and kept abusing him.

"But why are you so down on him?" asked Olyenin.

"Stingy! I don't like him!" exclaimed the old man. "When he dies, he will have to leave everything behind him. Whom is he hoarding for? He's built two houses already. He sued his brother and got away another garden from him. And then you know what a dog he is about writing all sorts of documents! They come to him from other stanitsas to get him to write for them. And when he writes he finishes it right up and done with it. That's the way he always does. Who's he laying up for? He's only one boy and the girl; when she's married, there's no more."

"Perhaps he's hoarding for the dowry," suggested Olyenin.

"What dowry? They'll be glad enough to take the girl; she's a fine girl. Yes, and you see he's such a devil that he'll want to give her to a rich man. He'll want to skin him out of a lot of money. Now, Luka is

a Cossack, he's a neighbor of mine, and my nephew, and a fine young fellow; he killed the Chechenets; he's been after her for a long time, but he won't give her to him. This, that, and the other excuse he finds against it; the girl's too young, he says. But I know what his ideas are. He wants them to come with formal gifts. But it would be too bad as far as the girl is concerned. But Lukashka'll get her yet. Because he is the first Cossack in the stanitsa, a jigit; he killed the abrek, he's going to have a cross."

"But what does this mean? Last evening, as I was walking in the yard, I saw this same girl kissing a Cossack," said Olyenin.

"You're mistaken," screamed the old man, stopping short.

"As God lives!" said Olyenin.

"A woman's a devil," was Uncle Yeroshka's sententious answer. "But what Cossack was it?"

"I could not see."

"But what sort of stuff did he have on his cap? Was it white lambskin?"

"Yes."

"And a red zipun? Was he about your size?"

"No, taller."

"It was he," cried Yeroshka, laughing boisterously. "It was he, my Marka. It was Lukashka. I call him Marka, for I am a joker. He was the one! I love him. I used to be just like him, my dear sir. How did I manage it? Well, my dushenka used to sleep with her mother and her sister-in-law, and yet I got in where she was. She used to live up-stairs. The mother was a witch, a perfect devil, and she hated me. I would go with Girchik, my *nyanya* (that means friend). I'd come under the window, then climb up on his shoulders, open the window, and then grope my way in. And there she would be asleep on the bench. Once I woke her up that way. How she squealed! She did n't know me. 'Who's there?' and I could n't say a word. Her mother was beginning to stir. I took my cap and stuck it into her snout. Then she knew by the rim whose

cap it was. She jumped up. In those days I got anything I wanted. She used to bring me curds and grapes and everything," added Uncle Yeroshka, giving a practical turn to his anecdotes. "Yes, and there were others besides her! Life was life then!"

"But how is it now?"

"Ah! now we will follow the dog, we will tree a pheasant; then you shoot!"

"Would n't you like to court Maryanka?"

"You watch the dog! I will show you before evening," said the old man, pointing to his beloved Lyam.

Both were silent.

They proceeded a hundred paces, occasionally exchanging a word, and then the old man again paused and pointed to a dead limb that lay across their path.

"What think you that is?" he asked. "Do you suppose it is right? No. That stick lies in the wrong way."

"Why is it wrong?"

He laughed scornfully.

"You don't know anything. Listen to me. When a stick lies that way you must not step over it; either go around it or fling it this way out of the road and repeat the prayer, 'To the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost,' and go with God's blessing. It won't do any harm then. So the old men have always told me."

"Now, what nonsense that is!" exclaimed Olyenin. "Tell me rather about Maryanka. So she goes round with Lukashka?"

"Sh! now keep quiet," and again the old man interrupted the conversation with a whisper. "Just listen. Now we come into the thick woods."

And the old man, stepping noiselessly in his porshni, went along over the narrow path which led into the thick, wild forest with its dense undergrowth. Occasionally he looked scowlingly at Olyenin, who tramped noisily along in his heavy boots, and, as he carried his gun carelessly, often got it entangled in the branches of the trees which grew thick along the path.

"Don't make such a noise; go softly, soldier!" said Yeroshka, in an angry whisper.

The air felt as if the sun was coming out. The mist was thinner, but still concealed the tops of the trees. The forest seemed monstrously high. At each step forward the view changed. What seemed a tree proved to be a bush, a bunch of rushes had the aspect of a tree.

CHAPTER XIX

It was warm. The village noises, which they had heard before, now no longer reached the huntsmen; only the dogs made their way through the brambles; occasionally the birds twittered. Olyenin knew that it was unsafe in these woods, that abreks always lurked in such places. He also knew that in the forest a person on foot had a powerful protection in his gun. He was not exactly afraid; but he was conscious that another in his place might have been afraid; and, as he gazed with strained attention into the misty, damp forest, and listened to the faint, distant sounds, he grasped his gun firmly and experienced a feeling that was new and at the same time agreeable to him.

Uncle Yeroshka, taking the lead, halted at every pool where double tracks of any wild beast were to be seen, examined them attentively, and pointed them out to Olyenin. He scarcely spoke a word, only occasionally making his whispered observations.

The path along which they were passing had some time previously been traversed by an arba, but had been long overgrown by grass. The forest of cork elms and chinar trees on both sides was so dense and so overgrown that it was impossible to see anything in it. Almost every tree was draped from top to bottom with wild grape vines; the underbrush was a thicket of blackthorn. Every smallest clearing was overgrown with blackberry vines, with rushes crowned with gray waving flowers.

Here and there great paths made by animals and small ones like the tunnels of pheasants led off from the wood-road into the depths of the thicket. Olyenin,

who had never seen anything like it, was at every step amazed at the exuberance of this virgin forest so impervious to cattle. The forest vegetation, the peril, the old man with his mysterious whispers, Maryanka with her strong superb figure, and the mountains, — all seemed to Olyenin like a dream.

"A pheasant has just alighted," said the old man, in a whisper, glancing around and drawing his cap down over his face. "Hide your snout, it 's a pheasant." He frowned angrily at Olyenin, and crept on almost on his hands and knees. "It does n't like a man's face."

Olyenin was still in the rear when the old man stopped and began to scrutinize a tree. A fowl was clucking down at the dog which was barking at him, at the foot of a tree, and Olyenin saw the pheasant. But, just as he was taking aim, Uncle Yeroshka's mighty fowling-piece went off with a report like a cannon, and the bird, which had started to fly up, fell earthward, scattering its feathers as it fell. As he went toward the old man, Olyenin started up another. Putting his gun to his shoulder, he aimed and fired. The pheasant flew up, then fell like a stone into the thicket, catching on the branches.

"Galliard!" cried Uncle Yeroshka, who was not a crack shot at a bird on the wing. Picking up the pheasants, they went on. Elated by the exertion and the praise, Olyenin kept talking with the old man.

"Hold on, we will go in here!" cried the old man, interrupting him. "Yesterday I saw the tracks of a stag there."

Turning off into the thicket and proceeding three hundred paces, they reached a clearing overgrown with reeds, and in places overflowed with water. Olyenin followed the old huntsman, and was about twenty paces behind him when he saw him bend over, shake his head significantly, and beckon with his hand. Hastening to him, Olyenin saw human footprints. Uncle Yeroshka called his attention to them: —

"Do you see?"

"Yes, I see; what of it?" replied Olyenin, trying

to speak as calmly as possible. "A man has been here."

The thought of Cooper's "Pathfinder" and of abreks flashed through his mind, and, as he noticed the precaution with which the old man went on, he could not make up his mind to ask about it, and was therefore in doubt whether this air of mystery resulted from peril or the exigencies of sport.

"Nay, that's my own track," replied the old man, simply, and then pointed to the grass over which could be seen the almost obliterated tracks of a wild animal.

The old man went on. Olyenin no longer kept in his rear. After they had gone twenty paces farther, they descended to a lower level and reached a thicket where there was a spreading pear tree, under which the soil was black and the fresh lesses of a wild animal could be plainly seen on the black soil. The place, all surrounded by wild grape vines, was like a snug covered arbor, dark and cool.

"He has been here this morning," said the old man, with a sigh. "See, the lair is still sweaty, it's fresh."

Suddenly a terrific crashing was heard in the forest, not ten paces away. Both were startled, and grasped their muskets, but nothing was to be seen; only there was a sound like the breaking of twigs. The regular, swift beat of a gallop was heard for an instant, then the crashing changed into a dull rumble, ever farther and farther away, echoing through the still forest. Something seemed to give way in Olyenin's heart. With a dazed expression he gazed at the green depths of the wood, and at last turned and looked at the old man. Uncle Yeroshka, with his gun still at his shoulder, was standing motionless; his hat was on the back of his head, his eyes gleamed with an unusual light, and his opened mouth, showing the stumps of his yellow teeth, had an angry expression; he seemed petrified in that position.

"A big horn!" he cried. And, throwing his gun down on the ground in his despair, he began to tear his white beard. — "Here he was standing. In a moment

we should have been on him. Fool! fool!"—and he wrathfully clutched his beard. "Fool! Hog!" he repeated, still twitching his beard.

Something seemed to be flying through the forest in the mist; farther and farther away, more and more dimly, echoed the hoofs of the escaping stag. ....

It was growing dark when Olyenin returned with the old man, weary, famished, and full of vigor. Dinner was waiting for him. He ate and drank with the old huntsman, and his heart was full of warmth and joy when they went out on the steps. Again before his eyes arose the mountains against the sunset. Again the old man related his endless stories about the chase, about the abreks, about his mistresses, about his wild adventurous life. Again the superb maiden Maryana, the beauty, went by, in and out, and across the yard. The strong outlines of her virginal form were visible underneath her single garment.

CHAPTER XX

On the following day Olyenin went alone to the place where they had started up the stag. Instead of going round through the gates, he crept through the thorn hedge as every one in the stanitsa did. And he had scarcely got loose from the thorns that caught in his cherkeska when his dog, which had run on ahead, started up two pheasants.

As soon as he had got fairly into the blackthorn thicket, the pheasants began to fly up at every step. The old huntsman had not shown him this place the day before, intending to keep it for hunting with the decoy. Olyenin shot five pheasants in twelve shots, and, in trying to crawl after them through the thicket, he exerted himself so vigorously that the sweat poured from him.

He called back his dog, uncocked his gun, loaded it with a bullet instead of shot, and, driving away the gnats with the sleeves of his cherkeska, he noiselessly made his way to where they had been the day before. But

it was impossible to restrain the dog, which kept finding fresh trails, and he killed still another brace of pheasants, and the delay caused by this prevented him from reaching the place before it was noon.

The day was perfectly clear, calm, and hot. The morning coolness had entirely vanished from the forests, and myriads of midges literally covered his face, his back, and his hands. The dog was changed in color from black to gray: its back was wholly covered with them. It was the same with the cherkeska, through which they thrust their stings. Olyenin was ready to run from the gnats; it even seemed to him that it would be impossible for him to spend the summer in the village. He started to go home, but, remembering that men live through such things, he resolutely made up his mind to put up with it, and allowed the gnats to devour him. And, strangely enough, toward noon, that sensation began to be agreeable to him. It even seemed to him that if that atmosphere of gnats surrounding him on all sides, that paste of gnats which rolled up as he passed his hand over his face, and that intolerable itching over his whole body were absent, then the forest there would have lost for him its character and its charm. Those myriads of insects were so appropriate to the wildness of the vegetation, luxuriant almost to ugliness, to that world of beasts and birds filling the forest, that dark verdant foliage, that fragrant heated atmosphere, to those channels of muddy water everywhere oozing through from the Terek and bubbling up under the hanging leaves, that what had before seemed terrible and unendurable now began to be even agreeable.

Going to the spot where he had found the stag the day before, and finding nothing there, he felt an inclination to rest. The sun stood directly above the forest and scorched his head and neck whenever he came out into a clearing or went along a path. His seven heavy pheasants dragged down on his belt with a painful weight. He hunted for the trail of the stag, crept through the bushes to the thicket, to the very place where the stag had lain the day before, and stretched

himself out in his retreat. He saw all around him the dark verdure, he saw the damp lair, the dried fumets, the impression of the stag's knees, the lumps of earth torn up by its hoofs, and its latest tracks. He felt cool and comfortable; he had no anxieties, no desires.

And suddenly there came over him such a strange feeling of unreasonable joy and love toward everything that he began to cross himself and offer thanks, just as he used to do when he was a child. Suddenly this thought came into his mind with extraordinary clearness: —

"Here I, Dmitri Olyenin, an entity distinct from all others, am lying all alone, God knows where, in the very place where lives a stag,[1] an old stag, a handsome fellow, which has perhaps never even seen a man, and in a place, likewise, where no human being has ever been before, or thought of being. Here I sit and on all sides stand young and old trees, and one of them is twined about by the tendrils of the wild grape; around me swarm the pheasants, chasing one another, and perhaps they scent their dead companions."

He felt of his pheasants, examined them, and wiped his blood-stained hand on his cherkeska.

"Perhaps the jackals also smell them, and with fierce faces are sneaking over to the other side. Around me, flying among the leaves, which seem to them vast islands, the gnats are hovering in the air, and buzzing; one, two, three, four, a hundred, a thousand, a million gnats, and each one of them is buzzing something for some special reason around me, and each one of them is a Dmitri Olyenin, an entity distinct from all the others as much as I am."

He had a clear idea of what the gnats were thinking and buzzing about.

"This way, this way, children. Here 's something good to eat," they sang, as they settled down on him.

And it became clear to him that he was not in the least a Russian nobleman, a member of Moscow society,

[1] A pun; the Russian for stag is *olyen'*; in both words the initial *o* is pronounced like *a*.

the friend and relative of this person and that, but a mere gnat, like these others, or a pheasant, or a stag, like those that now had their haunts in the woods around him.

"Just like them, just like Uncle Yeroshka, I live my little life and shall die like them. He was right when he said: 'Only grass will be the aftergrowth.'

"And supposing it is only grass?" his thoughts ran on; "still I must live all the same, must be happy: because I have only one wish — happiness. It would be all the same, whatever I was: whether an animal, like all the rest, over which the grass will grow and nothing more, or a frame in which a part of all-embracing Godhead is set; still I must live in the best way possible. How, then, must I live so as to be happy, and why have I not been happy hitherto?"

And he began to review his past life, and it seemed to him disgusting. He seemed in his own eyes such an exacting egotist, even while in reality he had no real needs at all. And all the time he was gazing at the brilliant green of the foliage, at the descending sun and the clear sky, and he realized that his happiness still kept at the same high level.

"Why am I happy? And what has been the aim of my past life?" he asked himself. "How exacting I have been for my own interests, how whimsical I have been, and what have been the results of my actions? — only shame and suffering! And now how little I find is essential for happiness."

And suddenly it seemed as if a new world were revealed to him. "This is what happiness is," he said to himself. "Happiness consists in living for others. This also is clear. Man is endowed with a craving for happiness; therefore it must be legitimate. If he satisfies it egotistically — that is, if he bends his energies toward acquiring wealth, fame, physical comforts, love — it may happen that circumstances will make it impossible to satisfy this craving. In fact, these cravings are illegitimate, but the craving for happiness is not illegitimate. What cravings can always be satisfied

independently of external conditions? — Love, self-denial."

The discovery of this, which seemed to him a new truth, so delighted and satisfied him that he sprang up and began impatiently to consider whom he might as quickly as possible sacrifice himself for, to whom he might do good, whom he might love.

"Since I need nothing for myself," he kept thinking, "why should I not live for others?"

He took his gun, and, with the intention of returning home as soon as possible so as to think this all over and find a chance to do good, he crept out of the thicket. When he came into the clearing he looked around: the sun was hidden behind the tree-tops; it had grown cooler, and the locality seemed to him perfectly unknown and unlike that surrounding the stanitsa. Everything had suddenly undergone a change, the weather and the character of the forest; the sky was covered with clouds, the wind soughed through the tops of the trees; all around him were to be seen only the reeds and the decaying forest primeval.

He started to call back his dog, which had run from him after some animal, and his voice reëchoed through the solitude. And suddenly a terrible dread came upon him. He began to be afraid. He remembered the abreks, and their murderous deeds of which he had been told, and he began to imagine that a Chechenets was hiding behind every bush, ready to leap out at him, and he saw himself defending his life, or dying or playing the coward. The thought of God and of the future life came to him with a vividness long unexperienced. But all around him was the same dusky, stern, wild nature.

"And is it any use," he asked himself, "to have lived for self, when here you may die, and die not having accomplished any good, and die here far away from all human eyes?"

He struck off in the direction where he supposed the stanitsa lay. He had entirely forgotten about his hunting; he felt desperately tired; he glanced with appre-

hension, almost with horror, at every clump of bushes and tree, expecting that his life might be required of him at any second. After making a pretty wide circuit, he struck a canal through which flowed the sandy, cold water from the Terek, and he resolved to keep along beside this so as not to get turned around. He walked along, not knowing in the least where the canal would bring him out. Suddenly there was a crashing in the reeds behind him. He was startled and grasped his gun. It was only his heated and heavily panting dog jumping into the cold water of the ditch and beginning to lap it.

Olyenin felt a sense of shame.

He stooped down and drank with him, and then he followed in the direction of the canal, expecting that it would bring him to the stanitsa. But in spite of the dog's companionship, everything around him seemed more gloomy than ever. The forest grew dark; the wind played more and more violently in the tops of the ancient, decaying trees. Great birds flew crying around their nests in these trees. The vegetation grew less luxuriant; he came more and more frequently upon clumps of murmuring rushes and bare, sandy reaches, marked by the tracks of wild animals. Mingled with the whispering of the wind came a melancholy, monotonous murmur.

His whole soul was filled with gloom. He felt after his pheasants behind him, and found that one was gone. The bird had been torn off and lost, and only the bloody neck and head stuck to his belt. It seemed to him that never before in his life had he felt so overwhelmed with terror. He tried to offer a prayer to God; his one fear was that he should be killed without having done any good in the world, and his desire was so strong to live, to live so as to accomplish some great exploit of self-renunciation!

CHAPTER XXI

SUDDENLY it seemed as if the sun shone into his heart. He heard the sounds of Russian talk; he heard the swift, regular rushing of the Terek, and, within two steps, there opened out before him the tawny, hurrying surface of the river, with its damp, brown sands along the shores and bars, the distant steppe, the roof of the cordon a short distance above the water, a saddled horse, with its feet hobbled, grazing, — and the mountains. The red sun peered for an instant from under the clouds, and its last rays shot cheerfully across the river, over the reeds, and gleamed on the roof and a group of Cossacks standing about. Among them Lukashka's vigorous form involuntarily attracted Olyenin's attention.

He felt himself again, and, without any apparent cause, perfectly happy. He had come to the Nizhni-Prototsky post on the Terek, and over against the pacific aul on the Chechen side. He greeted the Cossacks, but, finding as yet no chance to do any one good, he went into the house. No opportunity offered in the house either. The Cossacks received him coldly. He looked about in the clay-plastered room and smoked his cigarette. The Cossacks paid little attention to him: in the first place, because he was smoking a cigarette, and, secondly, because they had something else to distract them that evening.

Some hostile Chechens, relatives of Lukashka's abrek, had come down from the mountains, with a dragoman, to ransom the body. The Cossack commander was expected from the village.

The dead man's brother, a tall, finely proportioned man, with a beard trimmed and dyed red, was as dignified and haughty as a tsar, though he was dressed in a torn cherkeska and lambskin cap. His features bore a striking resemblance to the dead abrek. He did not deign to glance at any one; not once did he look at the dead man, but, squatting on his heels in the shade, he

smoked his pipe, spat, and, from time to time, gave imperious commands in a guttural tone, and his fellow listened deferentially and obeyed them. It was plain that this was a jigit, who had more than once seen the Russians in entirely different circumstances, and that nothing they had surprised him or attracted his attention now.

Olyenin went near to the dead man and began to gaze at him, but the brother cast a calm, contemptuous glance at him, and said something in an angry staccato. The dragoman hastened to cover the dead man's face with a cherkeska. Olyenin was dumfounded by the dignity and sternness of the jigit's face; he greeted him, and asked from what aul he came, but the Chechenets barely glanced at him, spat contemptuously, and turned away.

Olyenin was so surprised at the mountaineer's indifference or lack of interest in him that he explained it to himself as due to stupidity or because the man did not understand his speech.

He addressed himself to his companion.

His companion, the emissary and dragoman, was likewise ragged, dark, not sandy like the other, vivacious, and with exceedingly white teeth and flashing black eyes. He was eager for a talk, and begged for a cigarette.

"There were five brothers of them," related the interpreter, in broken Russian; "now the Russians already shot three; there were only two left; he's a jigit, very jigit," said the interpreter, indicating the Chechenets. "When Akhmet-Khan — that was the name of the dead abrek — was killed, his brother was on this side, hiding in the reeds; he saw the whole thing, and how they got Akhmet-Khan in a kayuk and how they brought him ashore. He sat there till night; he wanted to shoot the old man, but the others would not let him."

Lukashka came where the two men were talking and sat down.

"Well, what aul are you from?" he asked.

"Yonder in those mountains," replied the interpreter, pointing across the Terek toward a bluish, misty defile.

"Do you know Suyuk-su? It's ten versts beyond that."

"Do you know Gireï-Khan in Suyuk-su?" asked Lukashka, evidently proud of this acquaintance. "He's my kunak!"

"He's a neighbor of mine," replied the interpreter.

"A galliard!" And Lukashka, evidently very much interested, began speaking in the Tartar tongue with the mountaineer.

Before long the *sotnik*, or captain, and the village elder came riding up, followed by a suite of two Cossacks. The sotnik, one of the new officers, greeted the Cossacks, but there was no return greeting of, "We hope you are well, your Honor," as in the army; only one or two here and there made him a bow. A few, and Lukashka among the number, stood up and formed in line. The sergeant reported that all was satisfactory at the post.

All this seemed ridiculous to Olyenin; these Cossacks were playing soldier. But the formalities quickly assumed more simplicity, and the sotnik, who was a clever Cossack, like all the rest, was soon briskly talking Tartar with the emissary. A paper was drawn up and given to the emissary, and money taken in exchange, and then they approached the corpse.

"Luka Gavrilof .... which one of you is he?" asked the sotnik.

Lukashka took off his cap and advanced.

"I have sent a report about you to the colonel. What will come of it, I do not know; I have recommended you for a cross; we'll soon make you a sergeant. Can you read and write?"

"Not at all."

"But what a superb fellow!" exclaimed the sotnik, continuing to play commander. "Put on your cap. What family of Gavrilofs? Any relation to the 'Broad'?"

"Nephew," replied the sergeant.

"I know, I know. Well, take it away; lend a hand there," said he, turning to the Cossacks.

Lukashka's face grew radiant with pleasure, and

seemed handsomer than usual. He turned from the sergeant, and, putting on his cap, again sat down near Olyenin.

After the body had been laid in the kayuk, the Chechenets, the brother of Akhmet-Khan, went down to the shore. The Cossacks involuntarily made way for him. With his powerful leg he pushed off from the shore, and leaped into the boat. Then, for the first time, as Olyenin noticed, he cast a fleeting glance over all the Cossacks, and again asked some abrupt question of his companion. The dragoman replied, and pointed to Lukashka. The Chechenets gazed at him, and then, slowly turning around, looked toward the other shore.

Not so much hatred as chilling scorn was expressed in his face. He said a few words more.

"What did he say?" asked Olyenin of the lively dragoman.

"Yours kill ours, ours will box yours. Always the same coil!" replied the dragoman, evidently answering at haphazard; then, laughing and showing his white teeth, he also sprang into the kayuk.

The dead man's brother sat motionless, and gazed steadily at the farther bank. He was so filled with hate and scorn that he found nothing worthy of his attention on the Russian shore. The dragoman, standing at the stern of the canoe, paddling now on this side, now on that, skilfully drove it across, and talked incessantly. As the current bore them obliquely down-stream, the canoe grew smaller and smaller, the sounds of the voices were almost lost, and at last they were seen to run on the farther shore, where their horses were in waiting. There they disembarked the body and laid it across the saddle, in spite of the restiveness of the horse; then, mounting, they rode off slowly along the road, past the aul, from which a throng of people came forth to look at them.

But the Cossacks, on the Russian side, were thoroughly satisfied and happy. Laughter and raillery were heard all about. The sotnik and the village elder went into the clay-plastered room of the hut to have some re-

freshments. Lukashka, with a radiant face, which he vainly tried to sober down, took a seat near Olyenin, resting his elbows on his knees and peeling a stick.

"What makes you smoke?" he asked, as if out of curiosity. "Is it good?"

He evidently said this because he noticed that Olyenin felt ill at ease, and was alone among the Cossacks.

"Yes, I am used to it," replied Olyenin. "But why do you ask?"

"Hm! If any of us fellows here were to smoke, it would go hard with him! How near the mountains look!" said Lukashka, pointing to the defile. "And yet it would take some time to get there!.... How will you be able to get home alone? it's dark. I will go with you, if you like," said Lukashka; "you ask the sergeant."

"What a galliard!" said Olyenin to himself, as he looked into the Cossack's merry face. The thought of Maryanka occurred to him, and the kiss which he had overheard behind the gate; and he began to feel sorry for Lukashka, sorry for his lack of education. "What folly and confusion!" he thought; "a man has killed another and is happy and satisfied as if he had done some good deed. Can it be that nothing tells him that there is no reason for rejoicing on account of this? That happiness consists not in killing others, but in self-sacrifice?"

"Well, don't fall into his hands now, brother!" exclaimed one of the Cossacks, who had come down to see the kayuk off, addressing Lukashka. "Did you hear what he said about you?"

Lukashka raised his head. "The one I christened?" asked Lukashka, meaning by this the Chechenets.

"The one you christened will not rise again, but the sandy brother lives still."

"Let him thank his stars that he got away whole," said Lukashka, with a laugh.

"Why is it you feel glad?" asked Olyenin of Lukashka. "If your brother had been killed, should you feel glad?"

A look of fun came into the Cossack's eyes as he looked at Olyenin. He evidently understood all that

Olyenin meant, but he stood on a higher ground than such considerations.

"Supposing it were so? It must be! Don't they kill our brothers?"

CHAPTER XXII

The sotnik and the village elder rode off; and Olyenin, so as to confer a pleasure on Lukashka, and so as not to travel alone through the dark forest, asked for Lukashka's company, and permission was granted. Olyenin supposed that Lukashka wanted to see Maryanka, and he was, moreover, glad of the company of such a pleasant-looking and garrulous Cossack. Lukashka and Maryanka were naturally united in his imagination, and he liked to think of them. "He loves Maryanka," said Olyenin to himself, "and I might love her." And a strange and novel feeling of affection overmastered him as they went home together through the dark forest. Lukashka was also light-hearted. Something like a mutual love was experienced by both of these young men, who were in every way so absolutely dissimilar. Every time that their eyes met, they felt like smiling.

"Which is your gate?" asked Olyenin.

"The middle one. I will go with you as far as the swamp. After that there is nothing more to be afraid of."

Olyenin laughed.

"Why should I be afraid? Go back. I am much obliged to you. I will go on alone."

"Not at all. What else have I got to do? Why should n't you be afraid? Even we are," said Lukashka, also laughing, and soothing his companion's vanity.

"Then come in with me. We will have a talk, we will drink together, and you can go back to-morrow."

"Do you think that I should not find a place to spend the night," returned Lukashka, laughing. "But the sergeant asked me to come back."

"I heard you last evening; you were singing a song, and besides I saw you."

"All men...."

And Luka shook his head.

"Well, are you to be married? Is that so?" asked Olyenin.

"Matushka wants me to marry. But I have n't any horse yet."

"Are n't you regularly enrolled?"

"How should I be? I 've only just been taken on. I have n't any horse yet and no way to arrange for one. And that 's why I don't get married."

"And how much does a horse cost?"

"One was bought the other day across the river; it was less than sixty rubles, but it was a Nogaï horse."

"Come and be my drabant.[1] I will manage it and I will furnish you with a horse," said Olyenin, with a sudden impulse. "Truly I will. I have two; I don't need them both."

"Why don't you need them?" asked Lukashka, with a laugh. "Why should you give me one? We shall get one in God's time."

"Truly I mean it! Or won't you come as my drabant?" asked Olyenin, pleased with the thought that had occurred to him of giving Lukashka a horse. He felt somehow a little awkward, however, and conscience-stricken. He tried to get out of his difficulty, but knew not what to say.

Lukashka was the first to break the silence.

"Say, have you a house of your own in Russia?" he asked.

Olyenin could not refrain from telling him that he had not one house, merely, but several houses.

"A handsome house? Larger than ours?" Lukashka asked good-naturedly.

"Much larger! ten times as large; three stories high," explained Olyenin.

"But have you such horses as we have?"

"I have a hundred head of horses, worth three hun-

[1] During expeditions, officers are accompanied by a *drabant* (trabant), who serves somewhat in the capacity of a body-guard. — AUTHOR'S NOTE IN TEXT.

dred — four hundred rubles apiece; but they are not such horses as you have here. Three hundred silver rubles! Trotters, you know. .... But I like those here much better."

"What made you come here? was it of your own free will or not?" asked Lukashka, still with a trace of mockery in his voice. "Here's where you missed your way," he added, pointing to a path by which they were passing; "you should have turned to the right."

"Yes, I came because I wanted to," replied Olyenin; "I was anxious to see your country, to take part in expeditions."

"I should like to go right off on an expedition," exclaimed Luka. "Hark! hear the jackals howl," he added, listening.

"But was n't it terrible to you to have killed a man?" asked Olyenin.

"What should I be afraid of? But I should like to go on an expedition!" repeated Lukashka. "How I long to! How I long to!" ....

"Perhaps we can go together. Our regiment will start before the holiday and your company will go too."

"But the idea of coming here of your own accord! When you have a house, and horses and serfs. I would have had a good time, a good time! What is your rank?"

"I am a yunker, but already presented for promotion."

"Well, if you are n't bragging about the way you live at home, then I should not have come away. Do you like to live here with us?"

"Yes, very much," said Olyenin.

It was already quite dark when, talking thus, they reached the stanitsa. The thick blackness of the forest still surrounded them. The wind roared high in the tree-tops. The jackals seemed to be right at their heels, howling, laughing, and yelling. But in front of them, in the stanitsa, were already to be heard the voices of women talking, the barking of dogs, and they could clearly distinguish the outlines of the cottages; lights gleamed in the windows; the air was heavy with the odor, the peculiar odor, of burning dung.

The feeling came over Olyenin, especially this evening, that here in this Cossack village was his home, his family, all his happiness, and that never anywhere else had he lived or would live again, so happily as in this stanitsa.

What a strong affection he felt for them all, and especially for Lukashka, that evening!

When he got home, Olyenin, to Lukashka's great amazement, went himself into the stable and brought out the horse which he had bought in Groznaya, — not the one which he always rode himself, but another, by no means to be despised, though it was no longer young, — and presented it to Lukashka.

"Why should you give me that?" asked Lukashka. "I have never yet done you any service."

"Truly, it is n't worth anything to me," insisted Olyenin; "take it, and you will give me something sometime. .... You see, sometime we will go on an expedition together."

Luka was bewildered.

"Well, now, what does this mean? Why is n't that horse worth anything?" said he, not glancing at the animal.

"Take it! take it! If you do not take it, you will offend me. Vanyusha, bring the gray to him."

Lukashka grasped the reins.

"Well, I am obliged to you. Now, this is unexpected, undreamt of!"

Olyenin was as happy as a twelve-year-old child.

"Fasten her here. She is a good horse — I bought her in Groznaya — and a lively jumper. Vanyusha, give us some red wine. We will go indoors."

The wine was brought. Lukashka sat down and drank the red wine.

"If God allows I will also do something for you," said he, as he drained the glass. "What .... is your name?"

"Dmitri Andreyitch."

"Well, Mitri Andreyitch, God save you. We will be kunaks. Now, come to us when you can. We are not

rich, but we are always glad to entertain a kunak. I will go and tell my mother; if you want anything, cheese or grapes, you shall have them. And if you come to the cordon, I will help you either in hunting, or across the river, or anything you want. Here, the other day, you have no idea what a splendid wild boar I shot! I shared him among the Cossacks, but if I 'd known I would have sent him to you!"

"All right: thanks! One thing, don't harness her; she won't be good for riding if you do."

"The idea of harnessing a horse! And here I will tell you one thing," said Lukashka, bending down his head, "if you 'd like, I have a kunak, Gireï-Khan; he has invited me to hunt on the road that leads down from the mountains, and we will go there together. I would n't give you up, I would be your murid."[1]

"Let us go; let us go sometime."

Lukashka seemed to be thoroughly at his ease, and to understand Olyenin's behavior toward him. The unaffected way in which he took it all for granted surprised Olyenin, and was not altogether agreeable to him. They sat at table for a long time, and it was late when Lukashka, not intoxicated, for he never entirely lost his head, but carrying a good deal of wine, pressed Olyenin's hand, and left him.

Olyenin looked out of the window to see what he would do. Lukashka went by softly, with his head bent down. Then, after leading the horse out of the gate, he suddenly shook his head, leaped on her back with the agility of a cat, gave her free rein, and dashed, with a wild cry, down the street. Olyenin supposed that he would go and share his happiness with Maryanka; but, though he did not do so, he felt happier than he had ever before felt in his life. He was as blithe as a child, and could not refrain from telling Vanyusha not only how he had given the horse to Lukashka, but also why he had done so, and from explaining to him all his new theory of happiness.

[1] The *murid* is a fanatical sect among the Mohammedans, whose special duty it is to exterminate Christians.

Vanyusha did not approve of this theory, and explained that he had no money to throw away — *larzhan ilnyapa* — and therefore this was all foolishness.

Lukashka galloped home, sprang down from the horse, and turned it over to his mother, bidding her put it out to pasture with the other Cossack horses; he himself was obliged to return that very night to the cordon. The dumb girl came out to lead away the horse, and made signs to show that she would throw herself at the feet of the man who gave him the horse, as soon as ever she saw him. The old mother only shook her head at her son's story, and in the bottom of her heart was convinced that Lukashka had stolen the animal, and therefore bade the dumb girl take him to pasture before it was daylight.

Lukashka went alone to the cordon, and his thoughts were all the time busy with the meaning of Olyenin's action. Although the horse was not a good one, in his judgment, still it was worth at least forty moneta, and he was very glad of the gift. But why this gift was conferred on him he could not comprehend, and therefore he did not feel the slightest sense of gratitude. On the contrary, his head was filled with obscure suspicions in regard to the yunker's intentions. He could not explain what these designs were, but it seemed impossible to admit the thought that a perfect stranger, out of mere kindness of heart, for no consideration in return, should present him with a horse worth forty rubles. If he had been drunk, then it would have been comprehensible; the desire to show off would have explained it. But the yunker was sober, and therefore it looked as if he wanted to bribe him to do some dirty work.

"Well, you're mistaken!" said Lukashka to himself. "I've got the horse and we shall see what will come of it. I am no fool. It takes some sharpness to outwit a fellow. We shall see."

In trying to persuade himself that he should have to be on his guard against Olyenin, he worked himself into a genuinely hostile feeling toward him. He told no

one how he got his horse. To one he said he had bought him; he parried the questions of others with ambiguous answers. At the stanitsa, however, the truth was soon known. Lukashka's mother, Maryana, Ilya Vasilyevitch, and other Cossacks, when they learned about Olyenin's incomprehensible gift, were filled with suspicion and began to be afraid of the yunker. And yet in spite of their fears this action of his aroused in them great respect for his *simplicity* and wealth.

"Did you know, that yunker who's staying at Ilya Vasilyevitch's has given Lukashka a horse worth fifty moneta," said one. "He must be rich!"

"I have heard about it," replied the other, significantly. "It must be for some favor, though. We shall see, we shall see what will come of it. That's the Urvan's luck!"

"They're a sly set, those yunkers, curse 'em!" remarked a third. "He'll get him into some trouble."

CHAPTER XXIII

Olyenin's life ran on smoothly, monotonously. He had little to do with his superiors or his comrades. The position of a wealthy yunker in the Caucasus is remarkably advantageous in this respect. He is not required to work and he is not required to drill. As a reward for his services during the expedition, he had been recommended for promotion as a regular officer, and he was left in peace until the promotion was ratified.

The officers regarded him as an aristocrat, and therefore kept on their dignity toward him. The officers' card-playing, drinking-bouts, and song-parties, in which he had taken part on the frontier, had no attraction for him, and he held aloof from the officers' society and their life in the stanitsa.

The life of officers in these Cossack villages has for many years had its peculiar features. Just as every yunker or officer at the outposts regularly drinks porter, plays faro, and talks about the rewards for their expedi-

tions, so, when they come down into the stanitsas, they regularly drink chikhir with their landlords, treat the Cossack girls to sweetmeats and honey, flirt with them, and fall in love with them; sometimes even marry them.

Olyenin had always lived in his own way and had an unconscious aversion to beaten tracks. And here also he did not follow in the ruts laid down for the life of the officers in the Caucasus.

It came natural to him to wake with the sun. After drinking his tea and coming out on his porch to admire the mountains, the beauty of the morning, and Maryanka, he would put on his ragged, ox-hide zipun, the well-soaked footgear called porshni, belt on his dagger, take his gun and a pouch of luncheon and tobacco, call his dog, and, at six o'clock in the morning, be off into the forest back of the village.

Toward seven o'clock in the evening he would return weary and hungry, with five or six pheasants at his belt, sometimes with larger game, and often with the lunch and cigarettes in his pouch untouched. If the thoughts in his brain had been disposed like the cigarettes in his pouch, it could have been readily seen that during all these fourteen hours of wandering not one thought had been disturbed. He would come back morally fresh, vigorous, and perfectly happy. He could not have told what he had been thinking about all that time. Not thoughts, not recollections, not fancies alone, were fermenting in his brain — but snatches of each and all. He would try to recall, he would ask himself, what he had been thinking about. Now he would imagine himself a Cossack working in the gardens with his Cossack spouse, or an abrek in the mountains, or the wild boar even now running from before him. And all the time he would be listening, waiting, watching for a pheasant, a boar, or a stag.

Evenings, Uncle Yeroshka invariably came and sat with him. Vanyusha would bring a gallon of red wine, and they would sit quietly chatting and drinking, and then separate with mutual satisfaction. The next day the chase once more, once more the wholesome weari-

ness, once more the after-dinner tipple, and once more the feeling of content and happiness. Some holidays or days of rest he would spend the whole time at home. Then his principal occupation was Maryanka, whose every motion, without being aware of it himself, he would eagerly watch from his windows or the porch. He regarded Maryanka and loved her (at least so he thought) just as he loved the beauty of the mountains and the sky, and he had no thought of coming into closer relations with her. It seemed to him that it was out of the question for relations to exist between them such as were possible between her and the Cossack Lukashka, and still less such as existed between a rich officer and a Cossack maiden. It seemed to him that if he attempted to do what his comrades did, he would exchange his perfect happiness and peace of mind for an abyss of torments, disenchantments, and regrets.

Besides, he felt that in behaving as he did toward this young woman he was accomplishing a sort of self-renunciation, which gave him an equal amount of pleasure, and, above all, because he stood in awe of Maryanka, and nothing would have induced him to speak a word of unworthy love.

One summer day Olyenin did not go hunting, and was staying at home. Most unexpectedly an acquaintance of his, a very young man, whom he had met in Moscow society, came to call on him.

"Ah, *mon cher*, my dear fellow, how glad I am to find you here," he began in his Moscow mixture of Russian and French, and so he went on interlarding his talk with French expressions. "I heard some one talking about Olyenin. .... 'What Olyenin?' .... How glad I was to know that you were here. .... Now, Fate must have brought us together. .... Well, and how are you? What are you doing? What are you here for?"

And Prince Byeletsky told his whole story; how he had been sent for a time to join this regiment, how the commander-in-chief had invited him to be on his staff, and how he was going to accept after the campaign was over, though he felt very little interest in it.

"If one serves here in this wilderness, he must at least make a career .... get a cross .... rank .... get promoted to the Guards. All that is indispensable for me .... if not for myself, at least for the sake of my relatives, of my friends. The prince received me very cordially. He 's a thorough gentleman," said Byeletsky, all in a breath.

"I was presented for the Anna after the expedition. And now I am going to stay here till the campaign opens. It 's splendid here. What women! Well, and how are you getting along? Our captain told me .... you know Startsef .... he 's a good-hearted, stupid fellow .... he told me that you were living here like a terrible savage, that you don't have anything to do with any one of them. I could very well understand that you would not care to have much intercourse with the officers here. I am glad of it; you and I will see a good deal of each other. I am lodging at the sergeant's. What a girl there is there, Ustenka! I tell you, she is a beauty!"

And ever more and more frequently French and Russian words were bandied about from that world upon which Olyenin believed he had forever turned his back. The general impression of Byeletsky was that he was a pleasant, good-natured young man. Very likely he really was; but the sight of him to Olyenin was decidedly disagreeable, notwithstanding his handsome, kindly face; and the reason was that he was redolent of all that detested life which he had renounced. It was still more vexatious to him to feel it utterly beyond his powers to send off this man from that world, as if that old world to which he had formerly belonged had still some irresistible claim on him. He was vexed with Byeletsky, and with himself, but, contrary to his own will, he interlarded his conversation with French phrases, assumed an interest in the commander-in-chief and his Moscow acquaintances, and as a result of the fact that both of them, here at this Cossack stanitsa, spoke in this French dialect, he expressed himself contemptuously about his brother officers, about the Cossacks, and in the most friendly manner bade good-by to Byeletsky, promising to come to see him, and urging him to drop in often.

Olyenin, however, did not fulfil his promise, but Vanyusha approved of Byeletsky, declaring that he was a genuine barin.

Byeletsky immediately plunged into the usual life of a wealthy officer in a Cossack stanitsa in the Caucasus. To Olyenin's eyes, he appeared, in less than a month, like an old inhabitant of the village. He treated the old men, he had parties for the girls, and went in turn to their parties, boasted of his conquests, and, indeed, it came to this, that the village girls and women, for some reason, called him *dyedushka*, little grandfather, while the Cossacks, who have no trouble in settling the status of a man who likes wine and women, took to him, and even liked him better than Olyenin, who was an enigma to them.

CHAPTER XXIV

It was five o'clock in the morning. Vanyusha, on the doorstep of the cottage, was fanning the samovar with his boot-leg. Olyenin had already ridden down to the Terek for a bath. He had lately conceived the new amusement of swimming his horse in the river. Dame Ulitka was in her *izbushka*, or dairy, from the chimney of which arose the black, thick smoke of the just kindled oven; the maiden was in the shed, milking the cow buffalo.

"Won't you stand quiet, curse you!" rang her impatient voice, and then followed the regular sound of the milking.

On the street, near the house, were heard the lively steps of a horse, and Olyenin, riding bareback on a handsome dark gray horse, shining with wet, rode up to the gates. Maryana's handsome head, bound with a red kerchief (called *sorotchka*), looked out of the shed and was quickly drawn back. Olyenin wore a red silk shirt, a white cherkeska, from the belt of which hung a dagger, and a high hat. He sat rather jauntily on the wet back of his plump horse, and, with his gun over his shoulder, bent down to open the gate.

His hair was still wet, his face shone with youth and health. He felt that he was handsome, clever, and like a jigit; but in this he was mistaken. Any experienced Cossack would have known at a glance that he was a soldier.

He noticed the girl's face peering out, he bent down with especial adroitness, and, having opened the plaited gate, he dashed into the yard, pulling on the bridle and cracking the whip.

"Tea ready, Vanyusha?" he shouted cheerily, not glancing at the door of the shed.

He felt with satisfaction how his beautiful horse, prancing, begging for free rein, quivering in every muscle, and all ready to go flying over the hedge, gayly stamped its hoofs on the dry clay of the yard.

"*Cé prè*," replied Vanyusha.

Olyenin imagined that Maryana's lovely eyes were still looking at him from the shed, but he did not turn to see. Leaping down from the horse, he caught his gun on the step, made an awkward attempt to regain his balance, and looked in alarm toward the shed; but no one was to be seen, and only the regular sound of the milking was to be heard.

He went into his room, and, in a few moments, came out again with a book and his pipe, and sat down, with his glass of tea, on the side of the porch not yet reached by the oblique rays of the morning sun. He resolved not to go out before dinner, that day, and had counted on writing some long-neglected letters. But for some reason he felt disinclined to leave his comfortable place on the porch and to shut himself up in his room as in a prison. Dame Ulitka had finished building her fire; Maryanka had milked the cows, and had now come out and was collecting future fuel for the oven.

Olyenin had his book open before him, but he paid little heed to what was printed on its pages. He kept lifting his eyes from it and gazing at the powerful young woman working there before him. Whether she came into the moist morning shadows near the house, or went along through the yard, flooded with the cheerful brightness of the early day, — her symmetrical form, clad in

bright colors, shining in the sun and casting a long shadow,— he was afraid of missing the least of her motions.

It was a pleasure to him to see with what freedom and grace she moved about; how the pink shirt which constituted her only garment fell in artistic lines over her bosom and along her shapely legs; how she stooped over and drew up to her full height again, and how under the tightening garment the firm lines of her heaving breast came into full relief; how her slender feet, shod in old red slippers, of good form still, were planted on the ground; how her strong arms, with sleeves tucked up and showing all the play of the muscles, moved the shovel, impatiently as it were, and how her deep black eyes sometimes gazed up at him. Even though the fine lines of the brows were contracted, still her eyes betrayed a conscious satisfaction of their beauty.

"Hollo, Olyenin. Have you been up long?" said Byeletsky, in the frock coat of the Caucasian officer, coming into the yard and joining Olyenin.

"Ah! Byeletsky!" returned Olyenin, offering his hand. "How are you out so early?"

"What could I do? I was driven out. We are going to have a ball at my house to-night. Maryana, of course you're coming to Ustenka's," he continued, turning to the girl.

Olyenin was amazed at the easy familiarity with which Byeletsky addressed this young woman. But Maryana, pretending not to hear, bent her head, and, throwing the shovel over her shoulder, went into the dairy with a quick, strong gait like a man's.

"You're bashful, sister, you're bashful," cried Byeletsky after her. "She's afraid of you," and, smiling gayly, he ran up the steps.

"What do you mean: You're 'going to have a ball'? Who drove you out?"

"At Ustenka's, where I live, a ball, and you are invited. A ball.... that is, a collection of cakes and maidens!"

"Well, what should we do there?"

Byeletsky smiled slyly, and with a wink nodded toward the izbushka, into where Maryanka had vanished.

Olyenin shrugged his shoulders and reddened. "By God, you are a strange man!" said he. "Well, tell us about it."

He was frowning. Byeletsky noticed it and smiled insinuatingly. "Why, for goodness' sake!" he exclaimed; "here you are living in the same house with her; and such a splendid girl, a glorious girl.... a perfect beauty." ....

"She is a wonderful beauty. I never saw such women!" exclaimed Olyenin.

"Well, what of it?" asked Byeletsky, absolutely failing to understand.

"It may be strange," replied Olyenin, "but why should I not tell things as they are? Since I have been living here, women have, as it were, ceased to exist for me. And it is good and right so. For what on earth can there be in common between us and these women? .... Yeroshka is another matter; he and I have a common passion — hunting."

"Just hear him! What in common? What is there in common between me and the Amalia Ivanovnas? It's precisely the same thing. Admit they are rather dirty; but that's a mere matter of taste. *À la guerre, comme à la guerre!*"

"Well, I have never known your Amalia Ivanovnas, and could never get along with them," replied Olyenin. "But it is impossible to respect them; but these here I do respect."

"All right, respect them! who hinders you?"

Olyenin made no reply. He was evidently anxious to finish what he had begun to say. It lay too heavy a burden on his heart.

"I know that I am an exception," he went on, evidently somewhat embarrassed, "but my life has been so constituted that I not only see no necessity of changing my principles, but I could not live here — I do not say live as happily as I do now — I could not live here

at all, if I lived as you do. And besides I look for something different and find something quite different in them from what you do."

Byeletsky imperceptibly raised his eyebrows.

"All the same, come to my house this evening. Maryanka will be there, too; I will make you acquainted. Come, please do. If you find it a bore, you can go home. Will you come?"

"I would come, but I tell you truly I am afraid of falling seriously in love."

"Oh! oh! oh!" screamed Byeletsky. "Come, all the same; I will look out for you. Will you come? Word of honor?"

"I would come, but truly I don't understand what we are going to do; what *rôle* are we going to play?"

"Please, I beg of you! Will you?"

"Yes, I will come, perhaps I will," said Olyenin.

"For Heaven's sake, the charmingest women in the world, and here you are living like a monk! What does hunting amount to? Why spoil your life and not get the good that there is? Have you heard our company is going to Vozdvizhenskaya?"

"It is n't very likely. I was told that the eighth company would go," said Olyenin.

"No, I have a letter from the adjutant. He writes that the prince himself will take part in the campaign. I am glad that we shall meet him. I am beginning to be bored here."

"They say that there will be an incursion very soon."

"I had n't heard about that, but I have heard that the Anna has come to Krinovitsuin for his work on the last expedition. He expected to be made lieutenant," remarked Byeletsky, with a laugh. "There he was disappointed. He 's gone on the staff."....

When it began to grow dark, Olyenin's thoughts turned to the party. The invitation tormented him. He wanted to go, but the idea of being present seemed strange, wild, and rather formidable to him. He knew that no Cossacks or elderly women would be there, but

only marriageable girls. What would it be? How should he behave? What should he have to talk about? What would they say to him? What would be the relations between him and these wild Cossack maidens? Byeletsky had told him of such strange, cynical, and at the same time strict relations. .... It was strange for him to think of being there in the same room with Maryana, and possibly of having a chance to talk with her. This seemed out of the question when he remembered her stately reserve. Byeletsky had told him that all this would come about of itself.

"Is it possible that Byeletsky and Maryanka would keep company in that way? It would be interesting," he said to himself. "But no, it would be better not to go. The whole thing is disgusting, vile, and of no earthly use."

But once more he was tormented by the question: "What will it be like?" and his given promise, as it were, compelled him. He went out, still undecided, but he reached Byeletsky's quarters and went in.

The *khata*, or Cossack cabin, in which Byeletsky was lodged was just like Olyenin's. It stood on pillars about a yard and a half from the ground, and consisted of two rooms. The first, into which Olyenin entered by a steep staircase, was crowded with eider-down beds, rugs, quilts, and pillows, piled up in Cossack fashion in elegant and handsome arrangement along the end wall. On the side walls hung copper pans and utensils. Under the bench lay watermelons and gourds.

In the other room was a monstrous oven, a table, benches, and the ikons of the old believers. Here Byeletsky was domiciled with his folding bed, his well-packed trunks, a rug, on which hung his rifle, and various toilet articles and portraits scattered about. A silk khalat was flung upon a bench. Byeletsky himself, handsome and clean, lay in his shirt-sleeves on his couch, reading "Les Trois Mousquetaires."

He jumped up.

"Now, you see how I am established. Isn't it elegant? Well, I'm glad that you have come. They have

been making tremendous preparations. Do you know how they make their pirog? Out of dough, with pork and grapes! But that is n't the strong point. See what a bustle they are keeping up."

Indeed, as they looked in through the window, they perceived that an extraordinary hubbub was going on in the landlady's khata. Maidens were constantly running in and out from the entry, some with one thing, some with another.

"Will it be soon?" cried Byeletsky.

"Right away. Are you hungry, little grandfather?" and ringing laughter from the khata followed this sally.

Ustenka, plump, ruddy, pretty, with her sleeves rolled up, came running into Byeletsky's khata after plates.

"There, you! you 'll make me break the plates," she squealed to Byeletsky. "There, you ought to come and help," she cried, with a laugh, addressing Olyenin. "Lay in some zakuski for the girls," and by *zakuski* she meant cakes and confectionery.

"Has Maryanka come?"

"Of course she has. She has brought the pastry."

"Do you know," said Byeletsky, "that if you dressed up this Ustenka, and got her clean and gave her some jewelry, she would be prettier than all our beauties! Have you seen the Cossack beauty Borshcheva? She married the colonel. She 's a stunner! What *dignité!* Where she got it...."

"I never saw Madame Borshcheva, but in my opinion nothing could be more becoming than their costume."

"Ah!" said Byeletsky, sighing gayly, "I have such a faculty for getting along with any kind of life! I am going to see what they are up to." He threw on his khalat and ran out. "You look out for the zakuski," he shouted back.

Olyenin sent his friend's man to buy cakes and honey, and then suddenly it seemed to him so disgusting to spend money, as if he were purchasing some one, that he could give no decisive answer to the man's question — how many lozenges, how many cakes, he should get.

"Use your own judgment."

"For all?" asked the old soldier, significantly. "Peppermints are more expensive. They sell for sixteen."

"For all, for all!" exclaimed Olyenin, and took his seat in the window, wondering why his heart throbbed as if he were on the verge of doing something serious and improper.

He listened to the shrieks and squeals that arose in the girls' room when Byeletsky went there, and in a few minutes he saw him hurrying down the steps, followed by shrieks and romping and laughter.

"They drove me out!" he exclaimed.

In a little while Ustenka came into the khata, and with great dignity invited her guests, explaining that all was ready.

When they went into the other khata, everything was indeed ready, and Ustenka was engaged in arranging cushions along the side of the room. On the table, decked with a disproportionately diminutive napkin, were set a decanter of chikhir and a dried fish. There was an odor of pastry and grapes. Six young maidens in their best array, and without their kerchiefs, contrary to their usual custom, were huddled together in the corner behind the oven, whispering, giggling, and laughing.

"We humbly beg my angel to share our food,"[1] said Ustenka, urging her guests to draw up to the table.

Amid the throng of maidens, who without exception were pretty, Olyenin observed Maryanka, and it was painful and vexatious to him to meet her in such wretched and awkward circumstances. He felt stupid and out of place, but he resolved to do as Byeletsky did. Byeletsky, with a certain solemnity, but at the same time with perfect ease and self-possession, went to the table, drank a glass of wine to Ustenka's health, and invited the others to do the same. Ustenka explained that young girls did not drink wine.

"With honey we might," said a voice from among the girls.

[1] *Pomolit'*, literally to pray; in Cossack usage, to congratulate, to drink.

Byeletsky called in his servant, who had just returned from the shop with honey and sweetmeats. The man looked out of the corner of his eyes, either enviously, or contemptuously, at his superiors, who in his opinion were *dissipating*, carefully handed over the morsel of honeycomb and the cakes wrapped up in gray paper, and began to reckon up the cost of his purchases, but Byeletsky drove him out.

After honey had been mixed with the chikhir with which the glasses were filled, and the three pounds of cakes had been munificently poured out on the table, Byeletsky pulled the girls out from the corner by main force, seated them at the table, and began to distribute the good things among them.

Olyenin could not help noticing how Maryanka held two round peppermints and a piece of gingerbread in her little sunburned hand, uncertain what to do with them. The party was constrained and unpleasant, in spite of the liveliness of Byeletsky and Ustenka, and their efforts to amuse the company. Olyenin was ill at ease, cudgeled his brains for something to say, was conscious that he was regarded with curiosity, perhaps with amusement, and that he communicated his constraint to the others. His face flushed, and it seemed to him that Maryanka especially felt the awkwardness of the situation.

"They are probably waiting for us to give them money," he said to himself. "How can we give it to them? And how can we give it to them as soon as possible and go?"

CHAPTER XXV

"How is it that you are n't acquainted with your lodger?" asked Byeletsky, turning to Maryanka.

"How can I get acquainted with him when he never comes to see us?" replied Maryanka, giving Olyenin a glance.

Olyenin was somewhat abashed at this, gave a start, and answered at haphazard:—

"I am afraid of your mother. She scolded me so the first time that I went to see you."

Maryanka burst into a laugh.

"And so you were afraid?" she asked, looking at him and then turning away.

Now, this was the first time that Olyenin had seen the beautiful girl's full face; hitherto it had been wrapped up to the eyes in her kerchief. Not without reason was she regarded as the belle of the stanitsa. Ustenka was a pretty little maiden, short, plump, rosy, with merry brown eyes, a perpetual smile on her ruddy lips, and ever laughing and chattering. Maryanka, on the contrary, was not at all what you call *pretty* — she was *handsome*. Her features might have been considered rather too masculine, and almost coarse, had it not been for the harmonious proportions of her form and her powerful chest and shoulders, and chiefly the severe and yet affectionate expression of her long black eyes, shining out from under the shadow of her dark brows, and the friendly expression of her mouth and smile. She rarely smiled; for that very reason her smile was always effective. Her whole being was instinct with strength and health.

All the maidens were pretty; but all of them and Byeletsky, and the servant who came with the sweetmeats, involuntarily looked at Maryana, and, when they spoke, naturally turned to her.

She seemed like a proud and serene tsaritsa among the rest.

Byeletsky, in his endeavors to make the party a success, did not cease to chatter; he urged the maidens to pass round the wine, cracked jokes with them, and constantly made indecorous remarks in French to Olyenin about Maryanka's beauty, calling her "yours" — *la vôtre* — and urging him to do as he did.

But Olyenin found it more and more insupportable.

He was trying to devise some pretext for making his escape and running off, when Byeletsky proclaimed that Ustenka, whose name-day they were celebrating, must

carry round the chikhir *with kisses*. She consented, but on this condition, that money should be put into her plate-tray, as the custom is at weddings.

"The devil himself brought me into this disgusting affair," said Olyenin to himself, and he got up with the intention of leaving.

"Where are you going?"

"I am going to get my tobacco," said he, with the intention of running away, but Byeletsky detained him by the arm.

"I have money," said he, in French.

"It's impossible to get away, one must pay," thought Olyenin, and he felt much annoyed at his own lack of tact.

"Is it possible that I can't do as Byeletsky does? I ought not to have come, but, now that I am here, I have no right to spoil their fun. I must drink in the Cossack style," and, seizing a chapura,[1] he filled it with wine and drank it almost all. The maidens looked on with amazement, and almost with terror, while he was drinking. This seemed to them strange and unseemly. Ustenka brought him still more in a glass and kissed both him and Byeletsky.

"Now, girls, we can have a good time," said she, jingling on the plate the four moneta which had been contributed.

Olyenin no longer felt any sense of constraint. His tongue was unloosed.

"Well, Maryanka, now it's your turn to pass the glass with kisses," said Byeletsky, catching her by the hand.

"I'll kiss you this way," said she, feigning to box his ears.

"You can kiss the *little grandfather* even without any money," suggested another maiden.

"Sensible girl!" cried Byeletsky, and he caught and kissed the struggling maiden.

"Come, but you must pass the wine," insisted Byeletsky, returning to Maryana; "pass it to your lodger!"

[1] A wooden cup containing eight glasses. — AUTHOR'S NOTE IN TEXT.

And, seizing her by the hand, he led her to the bench and made her sit down beside Olyenin.

"See, what a pretty girl!" said he, turning her head so as to show her profile.

Maryana made no resistance, but she smiled proudly, and looked at Olyenin out of her long eyes.

"A perfect beauty!" repeated Byeletsky.

"See what a beauty I am!" Maryana's glance seemed also to say.

Olyenin, not realizing what he was doing, threw his arm around Maryana and tried to kiss her, but she suddenly tore herself away, nearly knocked over Byeletsky, pulled the cloth from the table, and darted behind the oven. Screams and laughter arose. Byeletsky whispered something to the girls, and suddenly they all rushed out of the room into the entry, and shut the door behind them.

"Why did you kiss Byeletsky and won't kiss me?" asked Olyenin.

"Well, I don't want to, and that's the end of it," said she, drawing up her under lip and frowning. "He's the little grandfather," she added, smiling. She went to the door and began to pound on it. "What did you lock the door for, you devils?"

"Come, let them be there, and we'll stay here," said Olyenin, drawing close to her.

She frowned again, and pushed him severely away from her. And again she seemed to him so magnificently beautiful that it recalled him to his senses, and he felt ashamed of what he was doing. He went to the door and tried to pull it open.

"Byeletsky, open the door! why do you play such stupid tricks?"

Maryana again broke out into her fresh, happy laugh.

"Ai! are you afraid of me?" said she.

"Yes, because you are cross, like your mother."

"Well, if you would only sit more with Yeroshka, then the girls would begin to like you better," said she, and smiled, looking him straight into the eyes.

He knew not what reply to make.

"But suppose I should come to see you?" said he, unexpectedly.

"That would be another thing," she returned, shaking her head.

At this instant Byeletsky gave a push to the door and opened it, and Maryana sprang away from Olyenin, in such a way that her hips struck against his leg.

"It's all rubbish, what I have been thinking; my ideas of love, and self-renunciation, and Lukashka. The one thing is happiness; the man who is happy is justified," flashed through Olyenin's head, and, with a strength that surprised even himself, he took the beautiful Maryanka in his arms and kissed her on her temple and cheek. The girl was not angry, but only burst into a hearty laugh and ran off to the other girls.

This was the end of the party. Ustenka's mother came home from her work, and the old dame scolded the maidens and sent them home.

CHAPTER XXVI

"Yes," thought Olyenin, as he returned home, "all I should need to do would be to give free rein, and I might fall foolishly in love with this Cossack girl."

He went to sleep with this thought, but imagined that this folly would pass and that he should return to his old life. The old life did not return, however. His relations to Maryanka were changed. The partition which had hitherto separated them was broken down. Olyenin always exchanged greetings with her now, when they met.

When the ensign came to collect his rent, and heard of Olyenin's wealth and generosity, he invited him to come in and see them. The old dame gave him a flattering reception, and, from the day of the party, Olyenin used often to go over to his landlady's, and sit with them till late into the evening.

To all outward appearances, he continued to live as before in the stanitsa, but in the depths of his heart

everything had undergone a change. He spent his days in the woods, but at eight o'clock, when it was already dark, he would go over to the other khata, alone or with Uncle Yeroshka. The people of the house had now become so accustomed to him that they wondered if he did not make his appearance.

He paid generously for his wine and was a quiet man. Vanyusha would bring him his tea there, and he would sit in the corner by the oven; the old dame, undisturbed by his presence, went on with her work, and they would converse over their tea or their chikhir about the deeds of the Cossacks, about their neighbors, or Olyenin would tell them about Russia, or they would ask him questions. Sometimes he would bring his book and read to himself.

Maryanka, like a wild goat, drawing up her feet under her, would sit on the oven or in the "dark corner." She took no part in the conversation, but Olyenin saw her eyes and her face, heard when she moved or when she crunched seeds, and had the consciousness that she was listening with all her being whenever he spoke, and felt her presence even when he was silently reading.

Sometimes it seemed to him that her eyes were fixed on him, and, when he caught her brilliant glance, he was involuntarily silent and gazed at her. Then she would look away, and he, while pretending to be deeply absorbed in conversation with the old dame, would listen for her breathing, for her every motion, and wait till she looked at him again.

In the presence of others, she treated him, for the most part, with a gay friendliness, but when they were alone she was wild and rude. Sometimes he went there before Maryana had returned from the street; then suddenly he would hear her firm steps, and her blue calico shirt would flash by the open door. As soon as she came into the room she would see him, and her eyes would smile with evident tenderness; then a mixed feeling of terror and joy would take hold of him.

He asked nothing and expected nothing of her, but every day her presence became more and more indispensable to him.

Thus he grew so wonted to life in the stanitsa that his past seemed to him like something perfectly foreign, and the future, apart from the little world where he lived, had absolutely no existence for him. When he received a letter from home, from his relatives or friends, he felt aggrieved because they seemed to mourn over him as if he were a ruined man, while he, in his Cossack stanitsa, regarded as ruined men all those who did not lead such a life as he did. He was persuaded that he should never repent of having torn himself away from his former way of living and of having arranged his circumstances so simply and informally in the stanitsa. He had found it pleasant at the outposts and on expeditions; but only here, under Uncle Yeroshka's wing, in his forest, in his khata at the edge of the stanitsa, and especially when he remembered Maryanka and Lukashka, did he realize with perfect clearness the falseness of his former life, which even then had disturbed his mind, and which now seemed to him inexpressibly disgusting and absurd.

He found himself each day more and more free, more and more a man. The Caucasus was entirely different from his dreams. He had found here absolutely nothing resembling his illusions or the descriptions which he had heard and read about the Caucasus.

"Here are no such steeds, no such cataracts, as I imagined, no Amalat-beks, no heroes, no vagabonds," he said to himself. "Men live as Nature lives; they die, they are born, they marry, they are born again, they fight, they drink, they eat, they hold good cheer, and again they die, and there are no conditions except the immutable ones imposed by Nature herself on the sun, the grass, the animal, the tree. They are subject to no other laws." ....

And consequently these people, in comparison with himself, seemed beautiful, strong, and free, and, as he looked at them, he grew ashamed and sorry for himself.

It often seriously came into his thoughts to give up everything, to have himself enrolled among the Cossacks, to buy a cabin and cattle, to marry a Cossack wife, —

only not Maryana, whom he renounced in favor of Lukashka, — and to live with Uncle Yeroshka, to go hunting and fishing with him, and join the Cossacks on their expeditions.

"Why do I not do this?" he asked himself. "What am I waiting for?"

And he tortured himself, he covered himself with ridicule.

"Or is it that I am afraid to do this which I find to be reasonable and right? Is the desire to be a simple Cossack, to live close to Nature, to do no harm to any one, but rather to do men good, — is the dream of doing this more stupid than to dream what I dreamt before, of being, for instance, a minister, of being a regimental commander?"

But some voice seemed to bid him wait and not decide hastily. He was restrained by the confused consciousness that he could not live exactly such a life as Yeroshka's or Lukashka's, because he had another ideal of happiness; he was restrained by the thought that happiness consisted in self-renunciation. His action toward Lukashka did not cease to rejoice him. He constantly sought an opportunity of sacrificing himself for others, but this opportunity did not present itself. Sometimes he would forget this newly discovered receipt for happiness, and feel himself free to take part in Uncle Yeroshka's life; but then he would suddenly remember it again and immediately cling to the thought of conscious self-denial, and consequently look calmly and proudly on all men and on the happiness of others.

CHAPTER XXVII

Before the grape-gathering, Lukashka rode in to see Olyenin. He had even more the appearance of a Cossack brave than usual.

"Well, how is it with you; are you to be married?" asked Olyenin, greeting him warmly.

Lukashka did not give a direct reply.

"See! I have swapped off your horse for one across the river; this is a horse. A Kabardinsky Lof-Tavro.[1] I'm a good judge."

They looked at the new horse, and made him go through his paces in the yard. He was indeed a marvelously fine animal, — a bay stallion, broad and long, with a glossy skin, a flowing tail, and the soft, delicate mane and withers of a thoroughbred. He was so fat that, as Lukashka expressed it, one could go to sleep on his back. His hoofs, his eyes, his teeth, everything about him was admirable, and showed plainly that he was indeed a horse of the purest blood. Olyenin could not help admiring the horse. He had never seen such a beauty in the whole Caucasus.

"And he can go, too," said Lukashka, caressing his neck. "What a gait he has! And so intelligent. He will follow his master."

"Did you have to give much to boot?" asked Olyenin.

"Well, I did not count it," replied Lukashka, with a smile. "I got him from my kunak."

"He's a marvel, a beautiful horse! What would you take for him?" asked Olyenin.

"He's worth a hundred and fifty moneta, but you may have him, he's yours!" exclaimed Lukashka, gayly. "Only say the word, you may have him. Take off the saddle and lead him in. Give me some chance to serve you!"

"No, not on any consideration."

"Well, then, here's something that I have brought you as a present — *peshkesh*, as we say," and Lukashka opened his belt and drew out one of the daggers that hung on the strap. "I got it over the river."

"Thank you very much."

"And matushka has promised to bring you some grapes."

"She need not, we can settle up sometime. You see, I am not going to pay you for the dagger."

[1] *Tavro*, a stock of Kabarda horses. The *Lof* or *Lova* is considered among the best in the Caucasus. — AUTHOR'S NOTE.

"How could you? We are kunaks. Girei-Khan invited me across the river to a hut, and said, 'Take your choice.' And so I took this Circassian saber. That 's our custom."

They went into the cabin and drank to each other's health.

"Are you going to stay in the village, now?" asked Olyenin.

"No, I have come in to say good-by. They are going to send me now from the cordon to the sotnya on the other side of the Terek. I am going to start to-day with my comrade Nazarka."

"And when will your wedding come off?"

"I shall be back before long; the matter will be arranged, then I shall go back to the service again," replied Luka, reluctantly.

"And are n't you going to see your bride?"

"What 's the use? Why should I see her? Whenever you come on the frontier, ask at the sotnya for Lukashka the Broad. And there are wild boars there! I have killed two. I will take you out hunting!"

"Well, good-by! Good luck to you!" [1]

Lukashka mounted his horse, and, without going in to see Maryanka, rode off jigit fashion up the street, where Nazarka was already waiting for him.

"Say! shan't we go in?" asked the latter, winking in the direction where Yamka lived.

"See here!" exclaimed Lukashka. "Suppose you take my horse there, and, if I am gone long, give him some hay. By morning I must be at the sotnya across the Terek."

"Say, did n't the yunker give you anything else?"

"Nay! I had to give him my dagger for thanks; else he would have been asking back the horse," said Lukashka, dismounting, and handing the bridle to Nazarka.

He slipped into the yard under Olyenin's very window and crept up to the window of Maryana's khata. It was now perfectly dark. The young girl, in nothing

[1] *Nu, praschaï! Spasi tibya Khristos;* literally, Christ save you.

but her shirt, was combing her braid, and getting ready to go to bed.

"It's I," whispered the Cossack.

Maryanka's face was stern and indifferent, but it suddenly lighted up when she heard her name. She raised the sash and put her head out, full of terror and joy.

"What is it? What do you want?" she asked.

"Open the door," demanded Lukashka. "Let me in for just a minute. I have been so lonely without you! It was terrible!"

He drew her face to him and kissed her.

"Truly, let me in!"

"What idle talk! I have told you I would not let you in. Are you here for long?"

He answered her only with a kiss. And she made no further inquiries.

"You see, it's mighty awkward to hug any one through a window!" complained Lukashka.

"Maryanushka!" cried the voice of the old dame. "Who's with you?"

Lukashka took off his cap, so as not to be recognized, and crouched down under the window.

"Go quick!" whispered the girl.

"Lukashka was here," replied the girl to her mother's question. "He was asking after father."

"Send him here."

"He's gone; he said he had no time."

In fact, Lukashka, with swift strides, crouching down, hastened under the windows across the courtyard, and was on his way to Yamka's. Olyenin had been the only one who saw him.

After drinking two wooden bowls of chikhir he and Nazarka rode away together toward the post. The night was warm, dark, and calm. They rode in silence; the only sound was the tramp of their horses' feet. Lukashka began to sing a song about the Cossack Mingal, but, before he had finished the first verse, he stopped and turned to Nazarka.

"You see, she would not let me in," said he.

"Oh!" exclaimed Nazarka. "I knew that she would n't. Yamka told me; the yunker has taken to going there. Uncle Yeroshka has bragged that he is going to have a rifle for getting him Maryanka."

"He lies! the devil!" said Lukashka, angrily. "She 's not that kind of a girl. But I 'll smash his ribs for the old devil!" and he began once more to troll his favorite song.

From the little village Izmaïlovo,
From the lady's lovely garden,
Swiftly flew the keen-eyed falcon;
From the garden rode the youthful hunter;
To his hand he called the keen-eyed falcon:
But the keen-eyed falcon answered:
"Thou canst never keep me in thy golden bird-cage,
On thy hand thou canst no longer hold me!
Now I seek the far blue ocean,
I shall kill the white swan for my own amusement.
For the swan's sweet flesh is pleasant to me."

CHAPTER XXVIII

The ensign and Dame Ulitka were celebrating the betrothal. Lukashka returned to the village, but he did not come to see Olyenin, and Olyenin did not attend the celebration, though the ensign invited him. His heart was sad within, more so than it had been since he had been at the stanitsa party. He had seen Lukashka, in his best attire, go with his mother, just before evening, into the ensign's, and he was tormented by the question, Why was Lukashka so cool toward him?

Olyenin shut himself up in his khata and began to write in his diary.

"I have thought over many things and have experienced many changes in these later days," he wrote, "and I find that I have arrived at what is printed in the A B C book. In order to be happy, only one thing is essential — to love, and to love with self-sacrificing love, to love all men and all things, to stretch in all directions

the spider-web of love, to attach it to whomever you meet. Thus I have taken Vanyusha, Uncle Yeroshka, Lukashka, Maryanka."

Just as Olyenin had written thus far, Uncle Yeroshka came in to see him. Yeroshka was in the most jovial frame of mind.

One evening a few days previous Olyenin had found him with a proud and happy face, in his yard, engaged in skilfully flaying a wild boar with a small knife. His dogs, and among them his favorite Lyam, were lying near him and wagging their tails as they looked up into his face. Some inquisitive urchins were watching him through the fence, and refrained from their usual banter. Several women, his neighbors, as a general thing not overpatient with him, had come in to greet him, one bringing him a little jug of chikhir, another some cream curds, another flour cakes.

On the following morning Yeroshka had been sitting in his shed, covered with blood, and selling wild pork by the pound, to one for money, to another for wine. On his face it was written, "God gave me good fortune; I have killed a wild boar; now the old uncle is of some use!" In consequence of this, of course, he had got drunk, and his spree had already lasted three days without his leaving the stanitsa. Moreover, he had been drinking at the betrothal party.

Uncle Yeroshka came away from the ensign's khata pretty drunk, with red face, tumbled beard, but in a new red beshmet embroidered with galloons, and carrying a *balalaïka*, or three-stringed guitar, which he had obtained on the other side of the Terek. He had long before promised Olyenin to give him this pleasure, and now he felt in the mood for it..... When he saw that Olyenin was writing, he looked disappointed.

"Write, write, my father," he said, in a whisper, as if he suspected that some spirit were sitting between him and the paper, and so, with the idea of not disturbing it, he crept by on tiptoe, and sat down on the floor noiselessly. This was Uncle Yeroshka's favorite position when he was drunk. Olyenin glanced at him, ordered

wine to be furnished him, and went on with his writing. It was dull for the old man to drink all alone. He felt like talking.

"I have been to the betrothal party. But what do I care for the swine? I don't like it! And so I have come in to see you."

"Where did you get your balalaïka?" asked Olyenin, still continuing to write.

"I was over the river, my dear sir, and got the balalaïka there," said he, in the same low tone of voice. "I 'm a master hand at playing it: Tartar, Cossack, gentlemen's, soldiers' songs, — anything you like!"

Olyenin once more glanced at him, smiled, and proceeded with his writing. This smile encouraged the old man.

"Now, put it up, my dear sir! Put it up!" said he, with sudden resolution. "They have affronted you, — throw them over, spit at them! Now, why are you writing, writing? What is the sense of it?"

And he mimicked Olyenin, scratching on the floor with his clumsy fingers, and screwing up his fat phiz into a contemptuous grimace. "What do you want to write those charms for? Better tipple, then you would be a galliard!"

He had no other conception in his mind of writing than of some harmful jugglery.

Olyenin laughed heartily, and Uncle Yeroshka joined him. He sprang up from the floor and proceeded to exhibit his skill in playing on the balalaïka and in singing Tartar songs.

"What makes you write, my good man! Here, you 'd better listen, for I will sing to you. If you should die, you would not hear such singing. Come, drink with me."

He began with a song of his own composition, accompanied by a dance: —

Ah! di-di-di-di-di-li,
When I saw him, where was he?
O'er the counter bending,
Pins and brooches vending.

Then he sang a song which his former sergeant-major had taught him: —

I fell in love on Monday,
All Tuesday I did sigh,
On Wednesday told my passion,
On Thursday no reply.
On Friday her decision came: —
Alas, no hope elysian came.
And so on Saturday I sought
To end a life so good for naught,
But soon a saner vision came
And so I laughed on Sunday.

And again the refrain: —

Ah! di-di-di-di-di-li,
When I saw him, where was he?

Then, winking, shrugging his shoulders, and shuffling, he sang: —

I will kiss thee, will enfold thee;
Ribands in thy hair will twine.
Nadezhenka, I will hold thee,
For thou art my hope divine;
Dost thou love me, sweetheart mine?

And he became so enlivened that he began to dance about the room as if he were a young galliard again, all the time strumming on his balalaïka.

The song *di-di-li* and others like it, *gentlemen's* songs, as he called them, he sang only for Olyenin. But afterward, having taken three more glasses of chikhir, he recalled the days of yore and gave him specimens of genuine Cossack and Tartar songs. In the midst of one that he loved especially, his voice suddenly broke, and he came to a stop, continuing to thrum on the strings of the balalaïka.

"Ah! my dear friend!" he exclaimed.

The strange sound of his voice attracted Olyenin's attention; the old man was weeping. Tears stood in his eyes and one was trickling down his cheek.

"Oh! days of my youth, you have gone, you will

never return again," he cried, sobbing, and then stopped. "Drink! why don't you drink!" he cried suddenly, in his tremendous voice, not wiping away the tears.

Especially painful to him was one mountain song. Its words were few, — its whole charm consisted in its melancholy refrain: —

Aï! daï! dalalaï!

Yeroshka translated the words of this song as follows: —

"The young man was driving his flock from the aul into the mountains; the Russians came, they burned the aul, they killed all the men, they took all the women prisoners. The young man came back from the mountains; where the aul had been was a waste; his mother was gone; his brothers were gone; his home was gone; one tree was standing. The young man sat down beneath the tree and wept. 'Alone like thee, alone I am left,' and the young man began to sing his song of grief: *Aï! daï! dalalaï!*"

And this moaning, soul-clutching refrain the old man repeated again and again.

After he had finished singing this song, Yeroshka suddenly seized a musket down from the wall, rushed hastily out into the yard, and fired off both barrels at once into the air. And once more he trolled out the melancholy refrain: *Aï! daï! dalalaï,* and relapsed into silence.

Olyenin hastened out after him upon the porch, and silently gazed at the dark starry sky in the direction in which the old man had fired. At the ensign's, windows were opened, voices were heard. Over the court and around the porch and windows the maidens crowded and ran from the dairy to the entry. A few Cossacks sprang forth from the doorway, and, unable to restrain themselves, gave a wild shout, and answered Uncle Yeroshka's song and shot.

"Why are you not at the betrothal?" asked Olyenin.

"God be with them! God be with them!" replied the old man, who had evidently been in some way affronted. "I like them not, I like them not! Ekh! what people!

Come into the room. Let them have their own spree, and we 'll have ours ! "

Olyenin went back into the khata.

" Well ! and is Lukashka happy ? Why did n't he come to see me ? " he asked.

" Lukashka ! They have been lying to him ; they told him that I would get the girl for you," he said, in a whisper. " What about the girl ! she will be ours if we want ; give a little more money and she 's ours ! I will get her for you, truly I will."

" No, uncle. Money would n't do anything there, if she does n't love. Better not speak about that ! "

" You and I are out of favor there ; we are orphans," said Uncle Yeroshka, suddenly, and again he burst into tears.

Olyenin drank more than usual while listening to the old man's tales.

" Well, now, my Lukashka is happy ! " he said to himself ; but his heart was heavy. The old man drank so much that evening that he wallowed on the floor, and Vanyusha was obliged to get the aid of some soldiers to drag him out. He was so indignant at the old man's disgraceful condition that he spat and did not even speak in French as usual.

CHAPTER XXIX

The month of August had come. For several days in succession there had not been a cloud in the sky ; the sun was insufferable, and from morning till night a hot wind blew, raising clouds of burning sand from the dunes and roads, and whirling it through the air, over rushes, trees, and stanitsa.

The grass and foliage were covered with dust ; the roads and marshes were dry and hard, and rang to the step. The water of the Terek had been long falling, and the canals were dry. The edges of the pond near the stanitsa, trampled into mire by the cattle, were beginning to grow hard, and the splashing and shouts of

the boys and girls in the water were heard all day long.

In the steppe, marshy hollows were dried up and the rushes were withered, and the lowing herds wandered all day about the pastures. Wild beasts had retired into wilder reaches of reeds and into the mountain forest beyond the Terek. Swarms of gnats and mosquitoes hovered over the lowlands and stanitsas. The snowy mountains were wrapped in gray mist. The air was devitalized and malodorous.

There was a report that the abreks had ventured across the shoaling river and were wandering about on this side. The sun each evening set in a burning, fiery glow.

It was the busy time of the year. The whole population of the stanitsa swarmed out into the melon fields and vineyards. The gardens had grown up with intertwining tendrils of luxuriant green and were full of cool, dense shade. Everywhere, under the broad, translucent leaves, hung the heavy clusters, purple and ripe. Over the dusty roads leading out to the gardens crept the creaking, two-wheeled arbas, loaded heavily with purple grapes. Where the wheels had passed over the dusty roads, here and there could be seen great clusters that had fallen off and been left behind.

Boys and girls, with their little shirts stained with grape-juice, with grapes in their hands and in their mouths, ran after their mothers. Everywhere on the road ragged workmen trudged along, carrying on their strong shoulders baskets full of grapes. *Mamuki*,[1] as the girls are called in sport, with their faces swathed up to the eyes in kerchiefs, drove the oxen dragging the heavy-laden carts. Soldiers, meeting them, would ask for some grapes, and the maiden would climb up on the arba and toss great handfuls down into the soldier's outstretched skirt.

Already, in some of the yards, the wine-pressing had begun. The air was fragrant with the odor of new wine. Troughs stained red as blood made their appear-

[1] Corresponding curiously to the old English term, *mauther*.

ance under the sheds, and Nogaï laborers, with their trousers rolled up and their calves all discolored, could be seen about the courtyards. Swine, grunting, fattened themselves on the grape-skins and rolled in them. The flat roofs of the dairies were thickly covered with dark, amber-colored bunches drying in the sun. Crows and magpies, filching seeds, collected around the roofs and flew from place to place.

The fruits of the year's labors were merrily gathered, and the harvest this year was unusually abundant and rich.

In the shady, green gardens, amidst this sea of vines, on all sides, laughter and songs and the gay voices of women were heard, and the bright-colored dresses of the women enlivened the scene.

Just at noon, Maryana was in her garden, in the shade of a peach tree, and removing from the unhitched arba the dinner for her family. In front of her, on a horse-blanket spread on the ground, sat the ensign, who had leave of absence from his school, and was washing his hands in water poured from a pitcher. A young lad, her brother, who had just come up from the pond, was drying himself with his sleeves and gazing impatiently at his sister and mother, in expectation of his dinner, and breathing hard.

The old mother, with quick movements of her strong, sunburned hands, was disposing the grapes, the dried fish, the curds and bread, on a small, low, round Tartar table.

The ensign, having wiped his hands, took off his cap, crossed himself, and drew up to the table. The young lad took up the pitcher and drank eagerly. The mother and the daughter sat down cross-legged at the table. Even in the shade, it was unendurably hot. The air about the garden was rank and close. A fierce, hot wind, making its way between the branches, brought no coolness, but monotonously waved the tops of the pear trees, the peach trees, and the mulberries that lined the garden.

The ensign, again muttering a prayer, brought out

from behind him a jug of chikhir, protected by grape leaves, and, after drinking from the mouth of it, handed it to his wife. The ensign was in a single shirt, unbuttoned at the neck and exposing his muscular, hairy chest. His keen, thin face was cheerful. Neither in his actions nor in his talk was there a gleam of his ordinary shrewdness. He was happy and natural.

"Well, shall we get through with it by evening?" he asked, wiping his wet beard.

"We shall have got it all in," replied the old dame, "if only the weather holds. The Demkins have only got half their harvest in," she added. "Ustenka is the only one of them that works; she nearly kills herself."

"What else could you expect?" exclaimed the old man, proudly.

"Come, Maryanushka, have a drink!" said the old dame, passing the jug to her daughter. "Here God has given; we shall have enough to make a fine wedding."

"There'll be time enough for that," said the ensign, with a slight contraction of the brows.

The girl dropped her head.

"Now, why won't you hear to reason?" demanded the old dame. "The business is already finished and the time is almost at hand."

"Don't try to be a fortune-teller," said the ensign. "Now it is harvest time."

"Have you seen Lukashka's new horse?" asked the old dame. "He did not keep the one that Mitri Andreyitch gave him; he has swapped it off."

"No, I have not seen him. But I was talking with our lodger's man to-day," said the ensign. "He says he has received another thousand rubles."

"A Crœsus; that's the end of it," said the old dame, sententiously.

The whole family were cheerful and content.

The work was proceeding successfully. The wine harvest was larger and better than their most sanguine expectations.

Maryana, after eating her dinner, gave some grass to

the oxen, then spread her beshmet out for a pillow, and lay down under the arba, on the dry trampled grass. All she wore was a single red *sorotchka*, that is, a silk kerchief, on her head, and a blue, faded calico shirt; but it seemed to her intolerably hot. Her face glowed, her limbs could not find a comfortable position, her eyes were heavy with sleep and weariness; her lips parted involuntarily, and her breast heaved with long, deep inspirations.

The harvest time had been in progress for a fortnight, and the hard, continuous labor had occupied the young girl's whole life. Early in the morning, at the first glow of dawn, she would spring up, wash her face in cool water, muffle herself up in her kerchief, and run off barefoot after the cattle. Then, after hastily getting on her shoes and her beshmet, she would take some bread in her bundle, hitch up the oxen, and go off to the garden for the day's work. There she would rest only a brief hour; she would spend her time in cutting off the clusters of grapes and in lugging the baskets, and then, at eventide, cheerful and unwearied, pulling the oxen by a cord and guiding them by a long branch, she would return to the stanitsa.

At dusk, after she had put the cattle in, she would fill the wide sleeve of her shirt with seeds and go out to the corner to laugh and chat with the other girls. But, as soon as the twilight had entirely faded from the sky, she always returned to the house, and, after eating supper in the dark izbushka, with her father, mother, and little brother, she would go, in careless indolence and full of glowing life, into the khata, sit down on the oven, and, in a half dream, listen to the lodger's stories.

As soon as he had gone, she would throw herself down on her bed and sleep till morning, a calm and dreamless sleep. On the next day the same story. Lukashka she had not seen since the day of the betrothal feast, and she waited without impatience for the day of the wedding. She had now become quite accustomed to the lodger, and it gave her pleasure to feel his eyes resting on her.

CHAPTER XXX

In spite of the fact that it was impossible to get out of the heat, though the gnats swarmed in the pleasant shadow of the arba, and though the young brother, rolling about, kept hitting her, Maryana had protected her face with a handkerchief, and was already sound asleep, when suddenly Ustenka, her neighbor, came running up, and, slipping under the cart, lay down by her side.

"Now, sleep, maiden, sleep!" exclaimed Ustenka, crawling under the arba. "Wait," said she, straightening up, "that isn't the way!"

She jumped up, broke off some green boughs, and twined them into the two wheels of the cart, and then spread her beshmet over it all.

"Get out of there!" she cried to the young brother, as she again crept under the arba. "Cossacks aren't allowed in with the girls, are they? Go along!"

As soon as she was alone under the arba with her friend, she suddenly clasped her in both arms, and, pressing close to her, began to kiss her on her cheeks and neck.

"My darling! my brother!" she exclaimed, breaking out into her dainty, rippling laughter.

"There! you learnt that of the little grandfather," replied Maryana, trying to escape. "There, let me be!"

And they both laughed so loud that the old dame shouted at them.

"Aren't you jealous?" whispered Ustenka.

"What nonsense! Let me have a nap. Now, what made you come?"

But Ustenka was irrepressible.

"What do you suppose I have got to tell you?"

Maryana raised herself up on her elbow and straightened her disordered handkerchief. "Well, what is it?"

"I know something about your lodger."

"There is nothing to know," retorted Maryana.

"Ah! you're a sly girl!" exclaimed Ustenka, nudg-

ing her with her elbow and giggling. "You won't tell me anything; but does n't he come to see you?"

"Well, suppose he does! what of it?" said Maryanka, and suddenly blushed.

"Well, you see, I 'm a silly maiden; I am willing to tell every one. Why should I hide it?" demanded Ustenka, and her jolly, rosy face assumed a thoughtful expression. "Am I doing any harm to any one? I love him, that 's all there is of it!"

"Who? the little grandfather?"

"Well, yes!"

"But it 's wrong."

"Ah, Mashenka, when should one have a good time, if not in her girlhood? When I get married, then I shall have to have children, I shall be full of care. Now, here you are going to marry Lukashka, and, then, good-by joy; that won't come, but children and work will."

"What is that? Others live well, even though they are married. It is all the same," replied Maryana, calmly.

"Come, now! just tell me once! how is it between you and Lukashka?"

"This is all there is of it. He wanted me. Father put it off a year, but it has just been decided to have the wedding this autumn."

"But what did he say to you?"

Maryana smiled. "Of course, you know what he said! He said he loved me. He kept asking me to go into the garden with him."

"What a goose! and, of course, you did n't go! And yet what a galliard he is now! Our first jigit! And how he carries on at the sotnya! Lately our Kirka came back and told what a horse he had got. And you made him feel very bad. .... And what else did he say?" pursued Ustenka.

"Must you know the whole thing, then?" asked Maryanka, with a laugh. "One evening he came riding up to the window; he was tipsy. He wanted me to let him in."

"Well, did n't you let him in?"

"Why should I? I gave my word once and I keep it. I am as firm as a rock," replied Maryanka, seriously.

"But he's such a hero! Wherever he goes, no maiden can refuse him anything."

"Let him go to others, then," returned Maryanka, haughtily.

"Aren't you sorry for him?"

"Yes; but I won't do anything foolish. That is wrong."

Ustenka suddenly hid her face in her friend's bosom, clasped her in her arms, and shook all over with suppressed laughter.

"You're a stupid fool!" she exclaimed, all out of breath. "You don't know what happiness is," and again she began to tickle Maryanka.

"Aï, stop it!" cried Maryanka, screaming through her laughter. "You have crushed Lazutka."

"There, you devils! why can't you stop your nonsense? one can't get a nap," the old dame's sleepy voice again was heard near the arba.

"You don't know what happiness is," repeated Ustenka, in a whisper, and half sitting up. "But how lucky you are! God knows! How you are loved! Even if you were pock-marked, but still they would all fall in love with you! Ekh! if I were only in your place, how I would twist that lodger of yours round my little finger! I watched him when he was at my house, and saw how he devoured you with his eyes! The little grandfather is my friend, and what won't he give me! But yours, you know, is one of the richest of the Russians! His man has been telling that he has his own serfs!"

Maryana got up and smiled at the thoughts that came to her.

"What do you suppose our lodger said to me one time?" she continued, biting a grass-blade. "He said, 'I wish I were the Cossack Lukashka, or your brother Lazutka.' Why did he say that?"

"Oh! they are always saying whatever comes into

their heads," replied Ustenka. "What does n't mine get off! Perfectly crazy!"

Maryana laid her head on her beshmet, threw her arm around Ustenka's shoulder, and shut her eyes.

"To-day he wanted to come and work in the garden; father invited him to come," said she, after a little pause, and then she fell asleep.

CHAPTER XXXI

The sun had now moved from behind the pear tree that shaded the arba, and the slanting rays, penetrating the screen of boughs that had been devised by Ustenka, scorched the faces of the sleeping maidens. Maryana awoke and began to arrange her kerchief. Glancing around, she saw, just beyond the pear tree, the lodger, with his gun over his shoulder, standing and talking with her father. She nudged Ustenka, and, without saying anything, smilingly drew her attention to him.

"I went yesterday, but had no luck at all," said Olyenin, uneasily looking around, but not seeing Maryana under her screen of branches.

"But you should go straight according to the compass to the very edge of the river; there, in the deserted garden which we call 'the waste,' you will always find hares," said the ensign, immediately changing his manner of speech.

"It 's lazy business going after hares in working hours!" said the old dame, gayly. "You would much better come and help us. You would have a nice time with the girls..... Come, girls, come out from there!" she cried.

Maryana and Ustenka were whispering and finding it hard to keep from laughing under the arba.

Ever since the ensign and his wife knew that Olyenin had given Lukashka a horse worth fifty moneta, they had become very obsequious to him; the ensign especially appeared to look with pleasure at his friendship with his daughter.

"But I do not know how to work," said Olyenin, trying not to look toward the arba, where, through the screen of boughs, he could catch a glimpse of Maryana's blue shirt and red kerchief.

"Come, and I will give you some peaches," said the old dame.

"That 's according to old Cossack hospitality, — a piece of old woman's stupidity," said the ensign, explaining and, as it were, correcting the old dame's words. "In Russia, I believe, you don't eat peaches so much as you do pineapple preserves."

"So there is shooting in the deserted garden?" inquired Olyenin. "I will go there," and, throwing a fleeting glance toward the screen of boughs, he lifted his *papakh*, or Cossack cap, and was soon lost to sight among the straight, green rows of the vineyard.

The sun was already sinking behind the inclosures, and its scattered rays were gleaming through the translucent leaves, when Olyenin returned to his hosts' garden.

The wind had died down, and a delicious coolness began to be diffused about, over the vineyards. As by a sort of instinct, Olyenin recognized from afar Maryanka's blue shirt through the rows of vine-stocks, and, picking off the grapes as he went, he walked toward her. His panting dog also occasionally snatched with his dripping mouth at some low-hanging cluster. All flushed with the heat, with her sleeves rolled up, and her kerchief dropping under her chin, Maryana was quickly cutting off the heavy clusters and laying them in her basket.

Not letting go of the vine-branch which she had in her hand, she paused a moment, smiled affectionately, and resumed her work. Olyenin approached her and slung his gun over his shoulder, so as to free his hands. The words, "Well, where are your people? God help you! Are you alone?" were on his lips, but he said nothing, and merely lifted his cap. He felt awkward to be alone with Maryanka, but, as if purposely to torment himself, he came close to her.

"You will be shooting some of the women with your gun that way," said Maryana.

"No, I won't shoot any one."

Then they both grew silent.

"You might help!"

He drew out a little knife and began silently to cut off the clusters. Drawing down from under the leaves a heavy cluster, weighing at least three pounds, in which all the grapes were pressed so closely together that they actually flattened each other for lack of room, he showed it to Maryana.

"Do you cut them all? Is n't this one green?"

"Give it here."

Their hands met. Olyenin clasped her hand, and she looked at him with a smile.

"Well, are you to be married soon?" he asked.

She looked at him with her stern eyes, and turned away without answering.

"And do you love Lukashka?"

"What is that to you?"

"I am jealous."

"The idea!"

"Truly, I am; you are such a beauty!"

And suddenly he felt such a terrible sense of shame at what he had said! His words, he thought, had such a vulgar sound. His blood boiled; he knew not what he did, and seized her by both hands.

"Whatever I am, I am not for you! What are you joking for?" replied Maryanka, but her eyes declared how firmly she was assured that he was not making sport of her.

"Joking! If you only knew how I...."

His words sounded to him still more commonplace, still more incommensurate with what he really felt; but he continued: —

"I can't tell you, but I am ready.... I don't know what I am not willing to do for you." ....

"Let me go, you rascal!"

But her face, her gleaming eyes, her heaving breast, her shapely limbs, all told him exactly the contrary. It seemed to him that she understood how commonplace was all that he said to her, but that she was superior to

all such considerations; it seemed to him that she had long known all that he wanted to tell her and had not the courage to tell her, but that she wanted to hear how he would say it. And how should she not know, he thought, when all that he wished to tell her was merely that which she herself was? "But she does not wish to understand, does not wish to answer," he said to himself.

"Au!" suddenly was heard not far away among the vine-stocks, and Ustenka's thin voice and her merry laugh rang out. "Come, Mitri Andreyitch, come and help me! I am alone!" she called to Olyenin, showing her round, innocent little face among the leaves.

Olyenin made no reply and did not stir from the spot.

Maryana went on with her work, but kept glancing at the lodger. He began to say something, but paused, shrugged his shoulders, and, adjusting his gun, hastened from the vineyard.

CHAPTER XXXII

He stopped once or twice and listened to Maryana's and Ustenka's ringing laughter as they joined company and went on talking pretty loud.

The whole afternoon Olyenin wandered about the forest after game, but having killed nothing, he went home at dusk. As he went into the yard, he observed the dairy door open, and a blue shirt moving about inside. He shouted out to Vanyusha rather loud, so as to let the family know that he had returned, and then sat down in his usual place on the porch. The family had already come back from the garden; they came out of the dairy, went into their khata, but did not invite him to join them.

Maryana twice went down to the gate. Once, though it was twilight, he thought that she was looking at him. He followed eagerly all of her motions, but could not make up his mind to go to her. When she went into the house, he stepped down from the porch and began

to walk back and forth through the yard. But Maryana did not come out again. Olyenin spent the whole night in the yard, without sleep, listening to every sound in the ensign's khata.

He heard them talking in the early evening, eating their supper, bringing out the feather-beds and preparing to retire; he heard Maryanka laughing at something; then he heard how gradually all relapsed into silence. The ensign was talking in a whisper with his wife, and there was the sound of some one breathing.

He went into his own room; Vanyusha had fallen asleep without undressing. Olyenin envied him, and was again impelled to go out into the yard, all the time expecting something, but no one appeared, no one moved; the only sound that he heard was the measured breathing of three persons. He recognized Maryana's breathing, and he kept listening to it and to the beating of his own heart.

In the stanitsa all was still; the late moon was rising, and the panting cattle, lying down or slowly struggling to their feet in the yards, became more discernible.

Olyenin asked himself, angrily, "What do I want?" and he could not tear himself away from his watching.

Suddenly he clearly distinguished steps and the creaking of the deal floor in the ensign's khata. He rushed to the door; but again nothing was to be heard but measured breathing; and then the cow buffalo, after a heavy sigh, got up on her knees, then on all four feet, switched her tail, and then followed the sound of something regularly dropping on the dry clay of the yard, and then the animal, with a sigh, lay down again in the misty moonlight....

He asked himself, "What am I going to do?" and resolutely determined to go to bed; but again the same sounds were heard, and he imagined that he saw Maryanka's figure coming out into this translucent moonlight night, and again he went to the door, and again he heard steps. Just before dawn he went to the window and tapped on the pane. Then he ran to the door, and now he heard Maryanka's steps approaching. He took

hold of the latch and shook it. Cautious bare feet, scarcely making the boards creak, approached the door. The latch was lifted, the door grated, there was a breath of sweet marjoram and melons, and then Maryanka's whole figure appeared on the threshold. He saw her for only a second in the moonlight.

She clapped the door to, and, muttering something, ran back with light steps. Olyenin began to tap lightly, but there was no answer. He ran to the window again and listened.

Suddenly the sharp, shrill voice of a man brought him to his senses.

"Excellent!" cried a short little Cossack, in a white lambskin cap, coming up close to Olyenin across the yard. "I saw it all; excellent!"

Olyenin recognized Nazarka, and made no reply, not knowing what to do or say.

"Excellent! Now I shall go to the village elder; I shall describe the whole thing; and I'll tell her father too. Fine girl, the ensign's daughter! One is n't enough for her."

"What do you want of me? what do you require?" asked Olyenin.

"Nothing, only I 'm going to tell the village elder."

Nazarka spoke very loud, evidently on purpose.

"Here we have a crafty yunker!"

Olyenin trembled and turned pale.

"Come here, come here!"

He seized him forcibly by the arm, and pulled him into his khata.

"There was nothing at all; she would not let me in, and I got no.... She 's honest."....

"Well, how can I tell?" said Nazarka.

"But I will give you something, all the same..... Here, just wait a minute!"....

Nazarka made no reply. Olyenin went in and handed the Cossack ten rubles.

"There was nothing at all; but, all the same, I am to blame; here, I give you this. Only, for God's sake, don't tell any one. For there was nothing at all."....

"A lucky escape for you!" said Nazarka, with a laugh, and was gone.

Nazarka had come that evening to the stanitsa, at Lukashka's request, to bespeak a place for a horse that he had stolen, and, as he was going home along the street, he had heard the sound of steps.

He returned the next morning to the sotnya, and boastfully told his comrade how shrewdly he had got ten moneta.

Olyenin that morning saw the family, and they knew nothing of what had happened. He did not exchange any words with Maryana, and she merely smiled as she looked at him. He spent another sleepless night, vainly wandering about the courtyard. The following day he went out hunting, and, when evening came, he called on Byeletsky, so as to escape from himself. He was alarmed about himself, and vowed not to visit the ensign's family any more.

The next night Olyenin was aroused by an orderly, who brought word that his company was to start immediately on an expedition. He was overjoyed at this deliverance, and felt a presentiment that he should never return to the stanitsa.

The foray into the mountains lasted three days. The commander-in-chief desired to see Olyenin, who was a relative of his, and proposed to him to take a position on his staff. Olyenin refused. He could not live away from his stanitsa, and he asked leave to go back.

For the part which he had taken in the foray, he was presented with a military cross. But, though he had been so desirous of it before, now he felt absolutely indifferent, and still more so in regard to his promotion, which had not as yet come.

Though there was no occasion for it, he took Vanyusha and rode down to the line, reaching the village some hours before the company. All the evening long he sat on his porch, gazing at Maryana, and again he spent the whole night wandering up and down the yard aimlessly and without a thought.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE next morning Olyenin awoke late. The family were off at their work. He did not go hunting, but now buried himself in his book, now went out on the porch; then he went into the khata again and flung himself on his bed. Vanyusha thought that he was ill. Before evening Olyenin sprang up with sudden resolution, sat down to write, and wrote till late into the night. He wrote a letter, but did not send it, because he felt that no one would comprehend what he meant, and there was no reason why any one besides himself should comprehend it.

This was what he wrote: —

I have received letters of condolence from Russia; they are alarmed lest I am going to ruin by burying myself in this wilderness. They say of me, "He will grow rough, give up all his interests, take to drinking, and, worse than all, will marry a Cossack girl." They say Yermolof was quite right in declaring that "any one who lives ten years in the Caucasus will either drink himself to death or marry an abandoned woman."

How terrible! Indeed, I should not go to ruin, but great happiness would be mine, if I became the husband of the Countess B——, chamberlain or marshal of the nobility! How low and despicable you all seem to me! You know not what happiness is, what life is! You ought once to experience life in all its artless beauty! You ought to see and to realize what I have each day before my eyes: the eternal, inaccessible snow of the mountains, and a majestic woman, endowed with the primitive beauty in which the first woman must have come from the hand of the Creator, and then you could answer the question, "Who is going to destruction? who is living truly or falsely — you or I?"

If you only knew how mean and detestable you are in your self-delusions! The moment that, instead of my cottage, my forest, and my love, there come up before my imagination your parlors, your ladies with pomaded locks mixed in with false hair, all those unnaturally moving lips, those weak limbs hidden and useless, and that fashionable lisp, which pretends to be conversation and has no right to the name, — then it becomes insufferably painful to me. I am pained at the thought of those

vacuous faces, those rich, marriageable girls, whose faces seem to say, "No matter: come, if you wish, though I am a rich maiden;" that sitting down and changing of places, and that insolent, brazen-faced pairing-off of men and women, and that eternal tittle-tattle, hypocrisy; those rules and regulations — with whom you must shake hands, to whom you must bow, with whom chat, and, finally, that everlasting *ennui*, bred in the bone, that descends from generation to generation, and consciously too, with the conviction that it is inevitable.

Accept one thing or believe in one thing. You must see and comprehend what truth and beauty are, and then all that you say and think will crumble into dust, and with it all your wishes of happiness for me and yourselves. Happiness is to be with Nature, to see her, to hold converse with her.

"God preserve us! he is going to marry a simple Cossack girl and spoil all his prospects in life." I imagine they say this about me, and with genuine pity. But I desire only one thing, absolute ruin, as you mean it: I desire to marry this simple Cossack maiden, and I hesitate to do this, because it would be a loftier happiness than I deserve.

It is three months since I first saw the Cossack maiden Maryana. The ideas and prejudices of that society from which I had come were still fresh in me. At that time I believed that it would be impossible for me to fall in love with that woman. I loved her just as I loved the beauty of the mountains and of the sky, and I could not help loving her, because she was beautiful, just as they were. Afterward, I became conscious that the contemplation of such beauty was becoming a necessity of my existence, and I began to ask myself, "Am I not in love with her?" But I found in me nothing like such a feeling as I imagined love must be. It was a feeling quite distinct from the pang of homesickness and the desire for wedlock, or from platonic affection, and, still more, from the carnal affection which I had experienced.

I was conscious of the necessity of seeing her, of hearing her, of feeling that she was near me, and I was not happy, but content.

After a birthday party, when I spent the evening with her and touched her, I was conscious that between me and this woman existed an indissoluble though invisible bond, against which it was impossible to struggle.

But still I struggled; I said to myself, "Is it possible for me to love this woman, who could never appreciate the intel-

lectual interests of my life? Would it be possible to love a woman for her beauty alone, to love a woman-statue?" This was what I asked myself, but I was already loving her, although I did not believe in my own feeling.

After the evening of the party, at which I spoke to her for the first time, our relations were changed. Hitherto, she had been, for me, a strange but majestic object of external nature; after the party, she became a human being. I began to meet her, to talk with her, to see her working in the vineyard, to spend whole evenings at her house. And, though I came into these close relations with her, she still remained in my eyes, as ever, pure, unapproachable, majestic. She always and everywhere replied simply, calmly, proudly, and with gay indifference. Sometimes she was affectionate, but generally every glance, every word, every motion of hers, was expressive of that indifference — not contemptuous — but crushing and fascinating.

Every day, with a simulated smile on my lips, I strove to hide my real feelings, and, with the torment of passion and desire in my heart, I exchanged trifling remarks with her. She saw that I was dissembling, but her eyes looked simply, directly, and gayly into mine. This state of things began to grow unendurable. I desired to be honest before her; I desired to tell her all that I thought and felt. I was unusually stirred; it was in the vineyard. I began to tell her about my love, in words which it makes me ashamed to recall — ashamed, because I ought not to have dared to speak of this with her, because she stood immeasurably above such words and the sentiment which I wished to express by means of them. I came to a halt, and, from that day, my position became insufferable. I did not wish to degrade myself by still keeping up my former trivial relations, and I felt that I was not qualified for simple and straightforward relations.

I asked myself, in despair, "What am I to do?" In foolish dreams, I imagined this woman now as my mistress, now as my wife, and I was seized with aversion at the idea of either. To make her my mistress would have been disgusting; it would have been murder. To make her my *baruinya*, a lady, the wife of Dmitri Andreyevitch Olyenin, as one of our officers here did, who married a Cossack girl, would have been still worse.

Now, if I could only become a Cossack, like Lukashka, steal horses, get tipsy on red wine, shout ribald songs, shoot

men down, and then, while drunk, creep in through the window where she was, without a thought of who I was or why I was doing this, that would be another thing, then we should understand each other, then I might be happy. I proposed to give myself up to this sort of life, and then I became still more conscious of my weakness, my inefficiency. I could not forget myself and my complicated, inharmonious, abnormal past. And my future appeared still more hopeless.

Each day before me the far-off, snow-capped mountains and this majestic, light-hearted woman. And the only happiness possible in the world out of my reach! this woman, unattainable for me! The most terrible and at the same time the sweetest element of my position to me was the thought that I understand her and that she can never understand me. She cannot understand me, — not because she is beneath me, on the contrary: it would be out of the nature of things for her to understand me. She is light-hearted; she is like Nature, is calm, tranquil, and sufficient unto herself. But I, an incomplete, feeble creature, wish her to understand my ugliness and my anguish.

I could not sleep nights and I wandered aimlessly under her windows, and yet I was not able to explain to myself what I was after.

On the eighteenth our company went on a foray into the mountains. For three days I was away from the stanitsa. My heart was heavy, and everything was a matter of indifference to me. Songs, cards, drinking-bouts, chatter about promotions, which occupied the men on the frontier, were more than ever offensive to me.

To-day I came back. I have seen her, have seen my khata, Uncle Yeroshka, the snow-capped mountains from my porch, and such a strong, novel sense of joy came over me because I understood it all! I love this woman with genuine love, I love for the first and only time in my life. I know what is in my heart. I have no fear of degrading myself by this feeling; I am not ashamed of my love; I am proud of it.

I am not to blame that I am in love. It came about against my will. I tried to escape from it in self-renunciation; I imagined that I was glad in the Cossack Lukashka's love for Maryanka, and I merely exasperated my love and my jealousy. This is not an ideal, a so-called *exalted* love, such as I have experienced before; neither is it the feeling of attraction, by which a man is drawn toward his love, by which he finds in his

own heart the fountain of his affections, and has everything under his own control. I have experienced this also. It is still less a desire for bliss; it is something quite different.

Perhaps in her I love Nature, the personification of all that is beautiful in Nature; but I have lost my power of will, and through me the elemental power, the universe of God, loves her; all Nature imprints this love into my soul, and says, "Love!" I love her, not with my intellect, not with my imagination, but with my whole being. In loving her, I feel that I am an inseparable part of all God's happy world.

I wrote you before about my new convictions, which were the result of my lonely life; but no one can know with what difficulty they were elaborated in me, with what joy I fell under their sway, and recognized the new path of life opening out before me. Nothing could have been dearer to me than these convictions. .... Well, ... love came, and they have vanished. Not even regrets for them remain. It is hard for me even to comprehend that I was able to prize such a one-sided, chilling, intellectual state of mind. Beauty came, and scattered into dust all the Egyptian life-work within me! And I have no regrets for what has vanished. Self-renunciation is all rubbish, fiddle-faddle. It is all pride, the refuge from deserved unhappiness, a salvation from jealousy at another's happiness. To live for others, to do good! Why? When my soul is filled with love for myself and one desire — to love her and to live with her, to live her life. Not for others, not for Lukashka, do I now desire happiness. I do not now love these others. Before this I should have said that this was wrong. I should have tormented myself with questions: what will become of her, of me, of Lukashka? Now it is a matter of indifference to me. I live not by my own self, but there is something stronger than I which directs me. I am tormented, but, whereas before I was dead, now I am alive. To-day I am going to her, and shall tell her all.

CHAPTER XXXIV

After writing this letter, Olyenin, though it was late in the evening, went over to the ensign's khata. The old dame was sitting on a bench behind the oven, spinning cocoons. Maryana, with uncovered head, was sewing by candle-light. When she saw Olyenin, she jumped up, took her kerchief, and went to the oven.

"Come, stay with us, Maryanushka," said her mother.

"Nay, I 'm bareheaded."

And she climbed up on the oven.

Olyenin could not keep his eyes from her knee and her beautifully rounded leg hanging down. He treated Dame Ulitka to tea. The old dame, in return, offered her guest cream cheese, sending Maryana to get it. But, after setting the plate on the table, Maryana again climbed up on the oven, and Olyenin felt only her eyes. They chatted about farm management. Dame Ulitka came and went in the enthusiasm of hospitality. She brought Olyenin grape jelly, grape cakes, her best wine, and insisted on treating him with that rude and proud hospitality peculiar to those who earn their bread by physical labors. The old dame, who had at first so affronted Olyenin by her rudeness, now often touched him by her simple, affectionate treatment of her daughter.

"Why fly in the face of Providence, batyushka! We have everything, thank God! we 've been pressing wine and storing it away, and we shall sell three barrels and still have enough to drink. Don't go yet. We will drink some more together in honor of the coming wedding."

"But when is the wedding?" asked Olyenin, feeling all his blood rush to his face and his heart beat irregularly and painfully.

There was heard a rustling behind the oven, and the cracking of seeds.

"Well, why should we put it off any longer? We are ready," replied the old dame, simply and as calmly as if there were no such person as Olyenin in the world. "I have got everything all ready for Maryanushka — a whole store of things. We shall give her a good send-off. There 's only one little thing that 's not quite right. Our Lukashka has been very wild of late; he 's on a spree all the time. He is full of his pranks. The other day a Cossack came in from the sotnya and said that he had gone off to the Nogaï."

"He 'd better look out!" said Olyenin.

"Well, I say to him, 'Lukashka, don't run such risks; you're a young man; of course, you want to show off; but you have time enough for everything. You've fought, and you've stolen horses, and you've killed an abrek; you're a galliard! But now you might live quietly.'.... But now he's acting abominably."

"Yes, I saw him twice on the frontier; he was tipsy all the time. He had just swapped another horse," said Olyenin, looking toward the stove.

Two great, black eyes flashed a stern and unfriendly glance at him. He began to feel ashamed at what he had said.

"Well, he's never done any one any harm," said Maryana, suddenly. "He spends his own money, anyway," and she leaped down from the oven and went out, slamming the door behind her.

Olyenin followed her motions with his eyes while she was in the khata, and, after she had gone out, he gazed at the door and waited, not heeding what Dame Ulitka said to him. After a little while, some guests came in: an old man, Dame Ulitka's brother, and Uncle Yeroshka, and, behind them, Maryana and Ustenka.

"How do you do to-day?" whined Ustenka, addressing Olyenin. "You're always having a good time."

"Yes, I am having a good time," he replied, and, for some unaccountable reason, felt awkward and ashamed. He wanted to go and could not. It seemed to him equally impossible for him to sit there and say nothing. The old man came to his aid by asking Olyenin to drink with him, and they did so. Then Olyenin drank with Uncle Yeroshka. Then again with the other Cossack. Then again with Yeroshka. And the more he drank the heavier became his heart. But the old men became lively. The two girls climbed on the oven and talked together in a whisper, looking at them while they drank.

Olyenin had nothing to say, but he drank more than all the rest. The Cossacks began to scream at each other. Dame Ulitka drove them out and refused to let them have any more chikhir. The girls laughed at

Uncle Yeroshka, and it was already ten o'clock when they all went out upon the porch. The old Cossacks invited themselves to go and make a night of it at Olyenin's. Ustenka went home. Yeroshka and Dame Ulitka's brother went to find Vanyusha, and the old dame herself disappeared in the dairy, to put things in order for the night.

Maryana was left alone in the khata. Olyenin noticed it. He felt as fresh and sound as if he had just waked up. Escaping from the old men, he went back to the khata. Maryana had lain down to sleep. He went up to her and tried to say something, but his voice failed him. She sat down on the bed, drew up her feet under her, getting as far away from him as possible, and silently looked at him with a wild, frightened look. She was evidently afraid of him. Olyenin was conscious of it. He felt disgusted and ashamed of himself, and at the same time had a certain proud satisfaction at the thought that he had inspired even this feeling in her.

"Maryana," said he, "will you never have pity on me? You don't know how I love you!"

She moved still farther away.

"It is the wine that is speaking, and not you. You do not mean what you say."

"It is not the wine. Give up Lukashka. I will marry you."

"What is it I am saying?" he asked himself, while he said those words. "Should I say the same thing to-morrow?".... "Yes, now and forever!" some inner voice seemed to answer.

"Will you be mine?"

She looked at him earnestly, and her fear seemed to leave her.

"Maryana, I am beside myself! I am not my own master! Whatever you bid me do I will obey," and a stream of incoherent, tender words of love came of their own free will.

"Now, what nonsense!" she exclaimed, interrupting him, and suddenly seizing the hand which he extended toward her. But she did not push away his hand; on

the contrary, she pressed it firmly between her strong, hard fingers.

"Do gentlemen marry Cossack girls?[1] Go away!"

"But will you be mine? I always...."

"But what shall we do with Lukashka?" said she, laughing.

He snatched away the hand, which she was still holding, and firmly clasped her young body. But she sprang out of his arms like a deer, leaped down in her bare feet, and ran out on the porch. Then Olyenin came to his senses and was horrified at himself. Again it seemed to him that he was inexpressibly base compared to her. But, not for a moment regretting what he had said, he went to his room, and, without vouchsafing a glance at the old Cossacks carousing on his wine, he threw himself down on his couch and slept more soundly than he had for many nights.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE next day was a festival day. In the afternoon all the population were in the street, their holiday attire making a brave show in the bright rays of the setting sun.

More wine had been pressed than usual. The people had ended their labors. In a month the Cossacks would be on the march, and meantime many families were getting ready to celebrate weddings.

On the village square, before the town-house, the greater part of the people were collected near the two shops, the one devoted to candies and melon seeds, the other to calicoes and wearing apparel. On the terrace surrounding the town-house sat and stood the old men, in sober gray and black zipuns without braid or decoration. Calmly, with measured voices, they chatted together about the crops and about "the boys," about communal matters and about the good old times, and gazed majestically and with cool indifference upon the rising generation.

[1] *Mamuki;* her mother is mamuka Ulita or Ulitka.

The women and maidens, as they passed in front of them, paused and bent their heads. The young Cossacks reverently slackened their steps, and, taking off their *papakhi*, or lambskin caps, held them up high above their heads. The old men stopped talking and looked, some sternly, some affectionately, at the young men, as they passed by, lifting their tall caps and putting them on again.

The Cossack maidens had not as yet begun to dance the *khorovod*, or popular choral dance, but, collecting in groups, dressed in variegated beshmets and with white kerchiefs wrapping their faces up to their eyes, they sat on the grass and the terraces of the cottages, out of the slanting rays of the sun, and laughed and chatted with merry voices.

Little boys and girls were playing lapta, flinging the ball high into the cloudless sky and running about the square with shouts and cries. Girls in their teens were at one end of the square, practising the khorovod and piping up the song with their timid, shrill voices. The Cossack clerks and young lads, come home from the government school on leave of absence for the festival, dressed in clean linen and in new red cherkeskas embroidered with braid, wandered about, with festive faces, in groups of twos and threes, arm in arm, from one group of women and girls to another, and pausing, exchanged remarks and jests with them.

The Armenian shopkeeper, in a blue cherkeska of fine cloth edged with braid, was standing at the open door of his shop, where rows of bright-colored kerchiefs were spread out in tempting array, and awaited purchasers, with the proud bearing of an Oriental merchant and the consciousness of his own importance.

Two red-bearded, barefooted Chechens, who had come from the other side of the Terek to witness the festival, squatted in the door of their acquaintance's house, and, as they carelessly smoked their short pipes and spat, exchanged observations in guttural tones.

Here and there a soldier, in ordinary uniform, in his old cloak, would saunter amid the gay-colored groups

across the square. Now and then already began to be heard the drunken songs of carousing Cossacks. All the cottages were shut up; the porches had been cleanly washed the evening before. Even the old women were out-of-doors. Everywhere on the dry, dusty streets were scattered the shells of melon and pumpkin seeds. The air was mild and calm; the cloudless sky, blue and transparent. The dull, white crests of the mountains, rising above the roofs, seemed close at hand and were growing rosy in the rays of the setting sun. Occasionally from beyond the river came the distant report of a cannon-shot. But in the stanitsa were heard commingling only the varied sounds of a merry festival.

Olyenin had been all the morning out in the yard, hoping to see Maryana. But she had dressed and gone to the chapel to mass; then, after she had spent some time on the terrace with the other girls, cracking seeds, she had come home with some of her companions, and had given the lodger a gay and affectionate glance. Olyenin was afraid to speak jestingly with her, especially before the others. He wanted to talk with her about what had taken place the evening before, and to have a final answer from her. He waited for another such moment as he had experienced the evening before; but the moment did not come, and he felt that to remain in such a state of uncertainty was more than he could bear. She again went out into the street, and, after a little time, he followed her, not knowing where he was going. He passed the corner where she was standing, all radiant in her blue satin beshmet, and his heart was filled with anguish as he heard her girlish laughter behind him.

Byeletsky's khata was on the square. As Olyenin walked by it, he heard the young prince's voice calling him to come in, and he did so. While talking they both sat down in the window. They were soon joined by Uncle Yeroshka, in a new beshmet; he took his seat near them, on the floor.

"There is the aristocratic crowd," exclaimed Byeletsky, pointing with his cigarette to a gay-colored group

on the corner, with a smile. "And there is my girl! do you see her? in red. It 's a new dress. — Say, are you going to begin the dances?" shouted the young man, from the window. "Just wait till it grows dark, and we will join them. Then we will take them round to Ustenka's; we must give them a ball."

"And I will go to Ustenka's, too," said Olyenin, decisively. "Will Maryana be there?"

"Certainly! come, by all means," said Byeletsky, not in the least surprised. "And is n't that picturesque?" he added, pointing to the gayly dressed girls.

"Yes, very," assented Olyenin, trying to appear calm. "On such festivals," he added, "I always wonder why it is that in consequence of its being such a day of the month, say the fifteenth, as to-day, all the people become suddenly so gay and content? Everything looks festal: eyes and faces and voices and motions and dresses, and the air and the sun. We don't have any such festivities."

"That 's so!" said Byeletsky, who was not fond of such abstruse questions. .... "But why don't you drink, old man?" said he, turning to Yeroshka.

Yeroshka winked to Olyenin, and said, referring to Byeletsky: —

"Truly, this kunak of yours is a fine fellow."

Byeletsky lifted his glass. "Allah birdui!"[1] said he, as he drained his glass.

"*Sau bul!* — To your health," exclaimed Uncle Yeroshka, with a smile, and draining his glass.

"You call this a festival," said he to Olyenin, standing up and glancing out of the window. "What sort of a festival is this! You should have seen how they celebrated them in old times. The women used to come out dressed in sarafans, all embroidered with galloon, and with a double row of gold coins around their breasts, and golden head-dresses[2] on their heads. When they

[1] *Allah birdui* means God has given, and is the ordinary greeting employed by the Cossacks when they drink together. — AUTHOR'S NOTE IN TEXT.

[2] The national head-dress, called *kokoshnik*.

went along, 'fr, fr!' what a rustle they made! Each woman was like a princess! They used to go along in whole swarms, singing songs till your heart would ache. They would carouse all night long. And the Cossacks would roll out whole barrels of wine in their yards, and they would sit around and keep it up till morning. And then, making a string, they would go along the street, hand in hand, to the very end of the stanitsa. Everybody they met they would make come along too. Yes, and they would go from one to another. Sometimes they would carouse three days running. My father used to come in, I remember, all red and puffed up, without his cap, all unstrung; he would come home, and how he would scold! Mother used to know how to manage him; she would give him cold caviare and chikhir to sober off on, and then go out herself through the village in search of his cap. The idea of drinking two days and nights steady! What men they were then! But look at them now!"

"Well, how did the girls look in their sarafans? Did they carouse alone by themselves?" asked Byeletsky.

"Indeed, they did! The Cossacks would come in or dash up on their horses and try to break up their dances, but the girls even would take their clubs. On Shrovetide once, some young bravo tried to break them up, but they fought; they beat his horse and they beat him. Then a young fellow would break down the fences, seize the girl he loved, and away with her! How they used to love them! Oh, what girls they were! Perfect queens!"

CHAPTER XXXVI

Just at this time, two riders came into the square from a side street. One of them was Nazarka, the other Lukashka. Lukashka sat somewhat sidewise on his fat bay Kabarda, which came lightly prancing along the hard street, and tossing its handsome head, with its shiny, silken forelock. The gun in its case, cleverly

balanced on his back, and the pistol behind him, and the felt burka rolled up and fastened behind the saddle, made it evident that Lukashka had ridden down from no near or peaceful place. The showy manner in which he sat sidewise on his horse, the careless motion of his hand as he almost audibly tapped his horse's belly with his whip, and, above all, his flashing, black eyes, glancing haughtily around, all gave evidence of conscious strength and the self-confidence of youth.

"Do you see what a galliard I am!" his eyes seemed to say, as they glanced from side to side. The stately steed, with its silver-mounted trappings and weapons, and the handsome Cossack himself attracted the attention of all the populace gathered on the square. Nazarka, lank and short, was not dressed nearly so well as his friend. As they rode by the old men, Lukashka reined in his horse and lifted high above his smoothly shaven, black head his papakh, trimmed with curly, white lamb's-wool.

"Well, have you driven off many Nogaï horses?" asked a withered little old man, with a dark, scowling face.

"Well, can't you count, grandsire, that you have to ask?" replied Lukashka, avoiding his question.

"It's no use taking that fellow along with you," muttered the little old man, with a still blacker scowl.

"There, the old devil seems to know all about it," muttered Lukashka, and his face assumed a troubled expression; but, glancing toward a group of Cossack girls, he spurred his horse toward them.

"Good evening, girls," he cried, in his strong, exuberant voice, suddenly reining in his horse. "Without me, you were growing old, you witches!" and he laughed.

"Hollo, Lukashka! how are you, my dear boy?"[1] exclaimed many merry voices. "Have you brought plenty of money?.... Will you get us girls some candy?.... Have you come for long?.... It's an age since we have seen you!"

[1] *Batyaka*, like *batyushka*, *batenka*, *batya*, irregular diminutive of *otyets*, father.

"Nazarka and I have come in on a flying visit, just for a spree," replied Lukashka, cracking his whip over the horse and riding him straight at the girls.

"And here's Maryanka forgotten you entirely," squealed Ustenka, nudging Maryana with her elbow, and bursting into a shrill laugh.

Maryana stepped out of the way of the horse, and, throwing her head back, looked straight at the Cossack with her big flashing eyes.

"But it has been so long since you were here! Why are you trying to trample us with your horse?" she asked dryly, and turned away.

Lukashka seemed perfectly gay. His face glowed with daring and pleasure. Maryana's cool answer evidently piqued him. He suddenly frowned.

"Climb up by the stirrup, and I will carry you off to the mountains, mamochka!" he suddenly cried, as if putting evil thoughts to flight; and he rode like a jigit among the girls. He bent down to Maryana. "I will have my kiss, I will have my kiss yet, so there!"

Maryana's eyes met his, and she suddenly blushed. She slipped out of his way.

"Now, be careful! You will step on my feet!" she exclaimed, and, bending over, she glanced down at her shapely legs, in neatly fitting blue stockings with clocks, and new red chuviaki, embroidered with narrow silver braid.

Lukashka turned to Ustenka, and Maryana sat down next a young Cossack woman, who held a baby in her arms. The child was attracted to the girl, and its chubby hands clutched after the string of the necklace which hung down over her blue beshmet. Maryana bent down to it and looked at Lukashka out of the corner of her eyes. At this moment, he was pulling from under his cherkeska, out of the pocket of his black beshmet, a package of sweetmeats and seeds.

"It's for all of you," he said, handing the package to Ustenka, and glancing at Maryanka with a smile.

Again a look of perplexity came over the girl's face. Something like a cloud came into her eyes. She

dropped her kerchief below her lips, and suddenly, putting her lips against the pale face of the child, which was still clutching her necklace, she began to kiss it passionately. The baby, pushing with its little head against the young girl's bosom, began to cry, opening its mouth and showing its toothless gums.

"Are you trying to choke the baby?" asked the mother, taking it to herself, and opening her beshmet to give it the breast. "You'd better make up with the lad."

"I'll just go and put up the horse, and Nazarka and I will carouse the livelong night!" exclaimed Lukashka, hitting the animal with his whip and galloping away from the girls.

Returning to the side street, he and Nazarka went to two cottages that stood side by side.

"They have had supper, brother! Come back as soon as you can!" cried Lukashka to his friend, dismounting at his dooryard and warily leading the horse through the plaited gates of his own yard.

"Hollo, Stepka!" he said to the dumb girl, who, also dressed in festal array, came out to lead away the horse. And by signs he made her understand that she should put him in the shed, but not unsaddle him.

The dumb girl made a strange noise, clucked with her tongue, and kissed the horse on the nose. That signified that she liked the horse and thought him a fine one.

"How are you, matushka? What! have you not gone out yet?" cried Lukashka, taking off his gun and mounting the steps.

His old mother opened the door for him.

"You see, I did n't expect you; I did n't have an idea of such a thing," said she, "for Kirka said you would n't come."

"Bring a little wine! come, matushka. Nazarka will be here; we want to celebrate the festival!"

"In a moment, Lukashka, in a moment!" said the old dame. "You see, the women have all gone out to celebrate. The dumb girl and I were just going to start."

And, taking the keys, she hurried out to the izbushka.

Nazarka put up his horse, took off his gun, and went over to Lukashka's.

CHAPTER XXXVII

"To your health!" said Lukashka, taking from his mother's hand a brimming cup of chikhir, and cautiously lifting it to his lips.

"There 's something up," exclaimed Nazarka. "That old clown said, 'Have you stolen many horses?' He must know a thing or two."

"The wizard!" said Lukashka, curtly. "What of it?" he added, shaking his head. "They are across the river by this time. Be on the watch."

"It 's all wrong."

"What 's all wrong? Take some chikhir to him tomorrow. That 's the way to do; and nothing will come of it. Now let us have a lark! Drink!" cried Lukashka, in just such a burly voice as old man Yeroshka would have uttered that word. "Come, let us go out in the street and have a good time with the girls. You go and get some honey, or I 'll send the dumb girl. We 'll spree it till morning."

Nazarka smiled.

"Shall we be here as long as that?" he asked.

"Only let us get at it! Skip round and get some vodka! Hold on, here 's some money!"

Nazarka went obediently to Yamka's.

Uncle Yeroshka and Yergushof, like great birds of prey, scenting out where any drinking was going on, came, one after the other, to the cottage. Both were drunk.

"Give us another half-gallon," cried Luka to his mother, in answer to their greeting.

"Now tell us, you devil you, where you stole them," cried Uncle Yeroshka. "You 're a galliard! I like you!"

"Well, I don't like you," replied Lukashka, with a laugh. "You take bribes from yunkers to the girls! What an old man you are!"

"It's a lie! indeed, it's a lie! Hé, Marka!" — The old man burst into a hearty laugh. — "Yon devil tried to bribe me! 'Go,' says he, 'try to get her for me.' He gave me a gun. No, God be with him! I would have done it, but I took pity on you. Now tell us, where have you been?" And the old man began to talk Tartar.

Lukashka replied vivaciously. Yergushof, whose knowledge of Tartar was limited, occasionally threw in Russian words.

"I tell you, you have been stealing horses. I am perfectly sure of it," insisted Yeroshka.

"Gireĭka and I went on a raid," said Lukashka, calling Gireĭ-Khan by this affectionate diminutive, which was a common usage among Cossacks who wished to make a show of their style. "He's always boasting that he knows the whole steppe on the other side of the river, and can go straight to the spot; and so we rode; it was dark night. My Gireĭka lost his way; he began to go cautiously and there was no sense in it. There was no aul anywhere about, and that was the end of it. Evidently we ought to have gone farther to the right. We hunted till almost midnight. Then, suddenly, we heard dogs bark."

"Fools!" exclaimed Uncle Yeroshka. "That's just the way we used to get lost at night-time in the steppe. The devil take it! Once I rode up to a little hill, and hid behind a clump of bushes; this is the way it was!" He put his hands to his mouth and howled like a pack of wolves, on one note. "The dogs instantly answered to it. — Now, finish your story! Well, what did you find?"

"We had a lively time of it. The Nogaĭ women almost caught Nazarka, fact!"

"Yes, that they did," exclaimed Nazarka, with a feeling of shame.

"Well, we rode on; again Gireĭka lost his way, got entirely off the track in the sand-hills. He supposed

that we were down near the Terek, but we were quite the other way."

"You ought to have gone by the stars," said Uncle Yeroshka.

"That's what I think," put in Yergushof.

"Yes, but you see it was all cloudy. Well, I was beating about, beating about! I had got one mare, put the halter on her. Then I let my own horse take his own gait. I think to myself, 'He will get us out of it.' Then, what do you think? What a whinnying, whinnying — nose to the ground!.... I gallop forward, straight into a village and out again. By this time it was quite light; we had just time to drive the horses into the woods and hide them there. Nagim came up from the river and took them."

Yeroshka shook his head.

"Sharp game! That's what I say! Many of them?"

"Got all there were," said Lukashka, slapping his pocket.

At this moment, the old mother came into the cottage. Lukashka ceased speaking.

"Drink!" he cried.

"That's just the way Girchik and I did once — got in late...." began Uncle Yeroshka.

"Now, we can't stop to hear that," said Lukashka. "I am going," and, having finished the wine in the bowl, and tightening his belt, he went out into the street.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

It was already dark when Lukashka went into the street. The autumn night was cool and without wind. The golden orb of the full moon swam out from behind the dark poplars which stood on one side of the square. The smoke arose from the dairy chimneys, and, melting with the evening vapors, hovered above the stanitsa. The odor of burning *kizyak* or dried dung, of new wine, and of the dampness mingled in the atmosphere.

Chatter, laughter, songs, and the cracking of seeds made just as much of a Babel as during the day, but the sounds were more distinct. White kerchiefs and tall lambskin caps could be seen in crowds near the fences and houses.

On the square, in front of the opened and lighted shops, was gathered a motley throng of Cossack lads and maidens; loud songs, laughter, and chatter were heard. Taking hold of hands, the girls formed a circle, gracefully tripping around over the dusty square. A lean maiden, one of the ugliest of their number, sang: —

Out of the forest, the little dark forest,
(Ai da liuli!),
Out of the garden, the little green garden,
Hither came, forth came two young braves,
Two young bravos, both unmarried.
Forth came, came they, stopped and quarreled, —
Stopped and quarreled.
By them passed a handsome maiden,
Passed them and addressed them: —
"Come, now, one of you shall have me!"
Then she chose the fair-faced fellow, —
Fair-faced fellow with the yellow ringlets.
He took her, took her by her right hand.
He led her, led her round the circle,
Boasted of her to his comrades: —
"Just behold my maiden, brothers!"

The old women stood around, listening to the songs. The little boys and girls ran around in the darkness, chasing one another. The Cossacks stood in a circle, pinching the maidens as they tripped by, and occasionally breaking into the circle to take a part in the dance. On the dark side of the shop-door stood Byeletsky and Olyenin, dressed in cherkeskas and lambskin papakhi, and talking French together, not aloud, but still distinctly, feeling that they were attracting attention. Hand in hand through the *khorovod*, or choral dance, ran the plump Ustenka, in a red beshmet, and the majestic Maryana, in handsome new shirt and beshmet.

Olyenin and Byeletsky were conferring together how they might entice the two girls away from the khorovod.

Byeletsky supposed that Olyenin wanted it merely for amusement's sake; his real desire, however, was to learn his fate from her lips. His overmastering desire was to see her as soon as possible alone, to tell her all, and to ask her if she could and would be his wife. Although this question had long before been decided by him in the negative, still he hoped that he should have strength enough to pour out his heart before her, and that she would understand him.

"Why did n't you tell me sooner?" said Byeletsky. "I could have arranged it all through Ustenka. You are so strange!"

"What 's to be done? Sometime, very soon, I will tell you all. The only thing now is, get her to come to Ustenka's .... for God's sake!"

"All right. That is easy. .... So, Maryana, you choose the fair-faced fellow, hey? And not Lukashka?" exclaimed Byeletsky, for politeness' sake addressing Maryana first; and then, without waiting for her answer, he joined Ustenka, and began to urge her to bring Maryana home with her. He had no time to finish speaking when the homely girl struck up another song, and the maidens set the circle in motion again, and began to sing. This was their song: —

Out behind the garden, garden,
Did the galliard wend,
Up street to the end.
Once, the first time that he came,
He waved his brave right hand;
Then the second time he came,
Waved his bonnet of beaver;
But the third time that he came
The brave young man did stand,
Stand, and then crossed over.
"How I longed to come to thee!
List! while I upbraid!
Why, oh why, my darling maid,
Dost refuse to walk with me
In the garden? Tell me, darling!
Dost thou scorn to talk with me?
By and by, my darling,
Thou wilt curb thy pride:
I shall send the wooers to thee,

I shall send to woo thee ;
Thou shalt be my bride !
I will make thy tears to flow ! "

Though my answer I knew well,
Still I dared not then to tell,
Dared not tell him " Yes " or "No."
To the garden then I go ;
In the green garden meet my friend,
Low before him bend.

" Here, oh, maiden ! here I stand,
Take this kerchief from my hand !
Prithee, maiden, deign to take,
Take it in thy hand so white,
Bear it in thy hand so white.
Take and wear it for my sake !
Love me, maiden, love me well !
What to do I cannot tell ; —
To the maid whom I call mine
Do I give this shawl so fine.
For a large shawl such as this is
I shall take at least five kisses ! " [1]

Lukashka and Nazarka, breaking into the circle, began to whirl round with the maidens. Lukashka, joining in with a harsh, unmelodious voice, and waving his arms, dashed into the very center of the ring. " Come on, one of you ! take hold ! " he cried. The girls gave Maryana a push, but she would not go. Over and above the singing were heard the sound of merry laughter, slaps, kisses, and whisperings.

As he passed by Olyenin, Lukashka nodded to him affectionately.

" Mitri Andreyitch ! and have you come too to look on ? " he asked.

" Yes," replied Olyenin, with decided curtness.

[1] In this example of the popular khorovod beginning, —

Kak za sadom, za sadom
Khodil, gulyal molodyets
Vdol ulitsui f konyets, —

there is a certain approximation to trochaic meter and the rough attempt at rhyme peculiar to improvisation. The irregular verse, with its sharp staccato and frequent repetitions, is entirely characteristic of all Slavonic folk poetry. — Ed.

Byeletsky bent over to Ustenka's ear and said something to her. She had no time to reply ere the circle whirled her away; but when it brought her back again she said: —

"All right, we 'll come."

"And Maryana, too!"

Olyenin bent over to Maryana. "Will you come? Please do, if only for a moment. I must speak with you."

"If the girls come, I will."

"Will you tell me what I asked you about?" he inquired, a second time bending over to her. "You are in good humor to-day."

She was away from him by this time, but he followed after her. "Will you tell me?"

"Tell you what?"

"What I asked you night before last," said Olyenin, whispering in her ear. "Will you marry me?"

Maryana hesitated for a moment.

"I will tell you," she said, "I will tell you to-night!"

And in the darkness her eyes gave the young man a gay and affectionate look.

He still followed after her. It was a pleasure to him to get as near as possible to her.

But Lukashka, who had been drinking incessantly, seized her by main force and dragged her by the hand from the ring into the center. Olyenin had barely time to whisper, "Come to Ustenka's, do," and joined his companion. The song came to an end. Lukashka wiped his lips, Maryanka did the same, and they kissed each other. "No, five times," said he. Talking, jesting, scuffling, were mingled in harmonious movement and harmonious sounds. Lukashka, who had now begun to grow rather mellow with drink, distributed among the girls confectionery in handfuls. "It 's my treat for all of you," he cried, with a proud, comically half-pathetic self-consciousness.

"But let those that gad about with the soldiers get out of the circle," he suddenly added, giving Olyenin a wrathful look.

The maidens grabbed their candy from him, and, laughing, tried to snatch it from each other. Byeletsky and Olyenin retired to one side. Lukashka, as if ashamed of his generosity, took off his papakh, and, wiping his forehead with his sleeve, joined Maryanka and Ustenka.

"*Dost thou scorn to talk with me?*" he said, quoting a line of the song which they had just been singing, and applying it to Maryanka. "*By and by, my darling, thou wilt curb thy pride,*" he repeated very significantly. "*Thou shalt be my bride; I will make thy tears to flow,*" he went on quoting, and hugged the two girls both at once.

Ustenka tore herself away, and, drawing back her arm, gave him such a blow in the back that she bruised her own hand.

"Say, are you going to have another dance?" he asked.

"Just as the girls wish," replied Ustenka. "But I am going home, and Maryanka wanted to come too."

The Cossack, still hugging Maryana, took her out of the crowd, behind the dark corner of the house.

"Don't go, Mashenka," said he. "Let us have one last good time. Go home and I will join you."

"What do I want to go home for? It's a festival, and I mean to make the best of it. I am going to Ustenka's," said Maryana.

"Well, I'll marry you, all the same."

"Very good!" said Maryana. "We'll see about that."

"Do you insist on going?" demanded Lukashka, and, pressing her to him, kissed her cheek.

"Now, let go of me! What are you bothering me for?"

And Maryana tore herself out of his arms and ran away.

"Ah, you girl! It's too bad!" cried Lukashka, in a tone of reproach, pausing and shaking his head. "*Thou wilt weep because of me,*" and, turning from her, he cried to the other girls, "Sing something, won't you?"

Maryana seemed somewhat frightened and at the same time annoyed by what he said.

She stopped.

"What's too bad?"

"What you're doing."

"But what?"

"I mean this: going around with that soldier lodger of yours and not caring anything for me."

"I'll do just as I please about loving you. You are not my father, nor my mother. What do you want? I'll love the one I want to love."

"All right!" said Lukashka. "Just remember."

He went to the shop. "Girls," he cried, "why are you standing? Give us another khorovod. Nazarka! hurry up and get some red wine."

"Well, are they coming?" asked Olyenin of Byeletsky.

"They will come in a minute," replied Byeletsky. "Come on; we must get ready for a ball."

CHAPTER XXXIX

It was late in the evening when Olyenin left Byeletsky's cottage, and followed the two girls. Maryana's white kerchief gleamed in the shady street. The golden moon was sinking toward the steppes. A silvery mist hovered over the village. All was quiet, no lights were seen in the windows; the only sound was the footsteps of the hurrying girls.

Olyenin's heart beat violently. The misty air came with cooling freshness to his heated face. He glanced at the sky, he glanced at the khata from which he had come. The candle that lighted it had just been blown out, and once more he began to look at the shadows of the young women hurrying along. The white kerchief was hidden in the mist. It was terrible for him to be left in the solitude; he was so happy. He sprang down from the steps and hastened after the girls.

"Oh, is it you? Some one will see you!" cried Ustenka.

"No matter."

Olyenin went to Maryana and threw his arms around her. She made no resistance.

"Don't kiss each other," said Ustenka; "marry first, then you can kiss, but now wait."

"Good-by, Maryana. To-morrow I am going to your father; I will tell him. Don't you breathe a word."

"Why should I?" replied Maryana.

The two girls hurried away.

Olyenin walked on alone, and passed in review all that had taken place. He had spent the whole evening alone with her in one room, near the oven. Not once had Ustenka left the khata where Byeletsky and she with the other girls had been having boisterous fun. Olyenin and Maryana had been talking in whispers.

"Will you be mine?" he asked her.

"You are mistaken, you would not have me," she replied merrily, but calmly.

"But do you love me? Tell me, for Heaven's sake!"

"Why should n't I love you? You are not crooked!" Maryana rejoined, with a smile, and squeezing his hand between her rough hands. — "What whi-i-te, whi-i-te hands you have, just as soft as cheese," she said.

"I am not joking. Tell me, will you be mine?"

"Why not, if my father will let me?"

"Listen! I shall go beside myself if you are not telling me the truth. To-morrow I shall tell your father and mother, and go through all the formalities."

Maryana suddenly laughed heartily.

"What is it?"

"Oh, it 's so funny!"

"Truly, I will buy a garden, a house; I will join the Cossacks." ....

"Look here, then, don't you go courting other women! I should be angry if you did."

Olyenin now took a keen delight in recalling all this conversation. At the thought of it, sometimes his heart

was filled with pain, and then again delight took possession of him. The pain arose from the fact that she was so calm all the time that she was talking with him, so calm and merry. It seemed as if she were not in the least affected by this new state of affairs. She scarcely believed his words, and she had no thought about the future. It seemed to him that she had only a passing affection for him, and that he was not associated with her thoughts of the future. But the delight arose from the fact that all of her words seemed to him true, and she had agreed to be his.

"Yes," said he to himself, "only when she is wholly mine shall we understand each other. For such love no words are needed, but life is needed, and the whole of life. To-morrow all will be made clear. I cannot live longer this way; to-morrow I shall tell everything to her father, to Byeletsky, to the whole stanitsa."....

Lukashka, after two sleepless nights, had drunk so much at the festival that, for the first time in his life, he was really intoxicated, and he slept at Yamka's.

CHAPTER XL

On the next day Olyenin woke earlier than usual, and his first waking thought was about what the future had in store for him; he recalled with delight her kiss, the pressure of her rough hands, and her words, "What white hands you have!"

He sprang up with the intention of going immediately to the ensign and Dame Ulitka, and proposing marriage to Maryana.

It was before sunrise, and it struck him that there was unusual commotion in the street, — running, riding, and shouting. He threw on his cherkeska and went out to the porch.

The ensign's family were not yet up.

Five mounted Cossacks were dashing up and down the street and talking in excited tones.

At the head of them rode Lukashka on his big

Kabarda. The Cossacks were all talking and shouting. It was impossible to make out what the trouble was.

"Strike for the upper station," cried one.

"Saddle your horses and join us lively!" said a second.

"It's the nearest way from this gate."

"Come this way," cried Lukashka. "We must start from the middle gate."

"And then it's nearer from here," said another Cossack, all covered with dust and riding a sweaty horse.

Lukashka's face was flushed and bloated from his evening's intoxication; his lambskin papakh was on the back of his head. He shouted imperative orders, as if he were the commander.

"What is it? Where are you going?" asked Olyenin, finding some difficulty in attracting the attention of the Cossacks.

"We are going to take some abreks; they are out there in the reeds. We are going instantly, but there are too few of us."

And the Cossacks, still shouting, and gathering new forces, rode up the street.

It occurred to Olyenin that it would not look well for him to stay behind. However, he made up his mind to return early. He finished dressing, loaded his gun with ball, mounted his horse, which Vanyusha had managed to saddle, and rejoined the Cossacks just as they were riding out of the village. The Cossacks, though in such a hurry, had dismounted and were standing in a circle, drinking chikhir, which they poured out from a cask they had brought, into the wooden *chapura*, or bowl. They handed it around and *prayed* for success in their expedition.

Among them was a dandified young Cossack *khorunzhy*, or ensign, who happened to be in the stanitsa, and assumed command of the half-score of Cossacks who were gathered together. They were all privates, and, though the ensign put on all the airs of a leader, they looked to Lukashka for directions. They paid absolutely no attention to Olyenin. And when all had mounted

again and started on their way, Olyenin joined the young ensign and tried to find out what the trouble was; the ensign, though ordinarily affable, behaved toward him with insolent condescension. With the greatest difficulty Olyenin learned from him what was up.

It seemed that scouts sent out to look for abreks had discovered a few of the mountaineers in the downs about eight versts from the village. The abreks were in ambush in a pit, and had fired off their guns and threatened that they would never surrender alive.

The sergeant, who with two men constituted the scouting party, had remained to watch them and had sent one of the Cossacks to the stanitsa for reinforcements.

The sun was just beginning to rise. Three versts from the stanitsa the steppe spread out in every direction, and nothing was to be seen except the monotonous, melancholy waste of sand, marked with the tracks of cattle and covered with withered grass and low rushes in the hollows, with occasional paths, scarcely traceable, and settlements of Nogaï standing out against the horizon far, far away. One was struck by the absence of shade everywhere and the barrenness of the whole region.

The sun always rises and sets on the steppe in a ruddy glow. When the wind blows, it carries with it whole mountains of sand. When it is calm, as it happened to be on this morning, then the stillness, undisturbed by a movement or a sound, is most striking. This morning it was calm and gloomy over the steppe, even after the sun had risen; there was a peculiar sense of emptiness and lassitude.

The air was not stirred by a breath; the only sound was the trampling and snorting of the horses, and even these sounds had no resonance and quickly died away. The Cossacks rode most of the time in silence. The Cossack always carries his weapons in such a way that there is no rattling or clanking. A rattling weapon is the greatest disgrace for a Cossack. Two Cossacks from the stanitsa came galloping up, and two or three words were exchanged. Lukashka's horse either stum-

bled or got entangled in the grass, and started to dash on ahead.

That is considered a bad omen among the Cossacks.

They looked around and hurried on, trying not to call attention to this circumstance, which had such a peculiar significance at such a time. Lukashka jerked his reins, frowned haughtily, set his teeth together, and cracked his whip over his head. His beautiful Kabarda suddenly began to dance on all four legs, not knowing on which to step, and as if wishing that he had wings to fly up into the air; but Lukashka hit him once with the whip under his fat belly, hit him a second time, and then a third, and the Kabarda, showing his teeth and whisking his tail and snorting, drew back on his haunches, and then sprang forward in advance of the rest of the band.

"Ekh! fine steed!" said the young ensign. The fact that he employed the word *loshad'* and not *kon'* signified in itself that it was an especially good horse.

"A lion of a horse," replied another of the older Cossacks.

The Cossacks rode in silence, sometimes at a walk, sometimes trotting, and this was the only thing that, for a moment, broke the silence and solemnity of their motions.

Over the whole extent of the steppe for a distance of eight versts the only living thing they met was a Nogaï *kibitka*, or nomad tent, which, set on a two-wheeled arba, was slowly crossing the steppe a verst away. It was a Nogayets, moving with his family from one settlement to another. They also met, in one hollow, two ragged Nogaï women with high cheek-bones, who, carrying wicker baskets on their backs, were collecting the manure of the steppe cattle for *kizyak*, or fuel. The young ensign, who spoke their language brokenly, tried to gather some information from these women; but they could not understand him, and exchanged glances, apparently fearing some harm.

Lukashka rode up, reined in his horse, and gave them their usual greeting in a lively voice; and the Nogaï

women were evidently pleased, and talked freely with him as to a brother.

"*Aï, aï kop abrek!*" said they, mournfully, and pointed with their hands in the direction whither the Cossacks had been riding.

Olyenin knew enough to understand that they said, "Many abreks." Never having witnessed such an action, though he had an idea of it got from Uncle Yeroshka's yarns, he was anxious to keep with the Cossacks and see the whole thing. He admired the Cossacks, he had his eyes wide open, his ears were alert, and he made his observations. Though he had taken his saber with him and his loaded gun, yet, as he noticed that the Cossacks held aloof from him, he resolved to take no part in the action, the more willingly because, in his opinion, he had already sufficiently proved his valor in the expedition on the frontier, and principally because now he was very happy.

Suddenly, in the distance, a shot was heard.

The young ensign grew excited and began to give his orders: how the Cossacks should divide their forces and on which side they should ride up.

But the men had evidently no intention of obeying those directions, and listened only to what Lukashka said, and looked only to him. Luka's face and whole figure were calm and triumphant. He led the scouting party on his Kabarda, with which the other horses found it useless to try to keep up, and with blinking eyes he gazed ahead.

"There goes a horseman," said he, reining in his horse, and falling back into line with the others.

Olyenin strained his eyes, but he could not see anything. The Cossacks quickly made out two horsemen, and with undeviating pace they made directly for them.

"Are they abreks?" asked Olyenin.

The Cossacks made no answer to his question, which was ridiculous in their opinion. Abreks would be fools to come over on this side with horses.

"That 's batyaka Rodka beckoning, I declare," said

Lukashka, pointing to the two horsemen, who were now in plain sight. "See, he is coming toward us."

In fact, in a few moments, it was evident that the horsemen were Cossack scouts, and the sergeant rode up to Luka.

CHAPTER XLI

"MUCH farther?" was Lukashka's monosyllabic question.

At this moment, not thirty paces distant, was heard a sharp report. The sergeant smiled slightly. "Our Gurka is peppering them," said he, nodding his head in the direction of the shot.

Going a few steps farther, they caught sight of Gurka squatting behind a sand-hill and loading his gun. Gurka, from sheer tedium, was firing at the abreks, who were hiding behind another sand-hill.

A bullet from that direction whistled over them. The ensign was pale and timid. Lukashka dismounted, gave the reins to a Cossack, and went to Gurka. Olyenin followed his example, and, stooping down, joined him. They had hardly got behind the sand-hill with Gurka when a couple of bullets whispered over their heads. Lukashka laughed, and, crouching down, glanced at Olyenin.

"They will shoot you yet, Andreyitch," said he. "You'd better go away. This is no place for you."

But still Olyenin was anxious to have a look at the abreks.

Behind a sand-hill, two hundred paces away, he saw a cap and weapons. Suddenly a puff of smoke arose from it, and a bullet whistled by.

The abreks were at the foot of the hill, in a fen. Olyenin was surprised at the place they had selected. It was like all the rest of the steppe, but the fact that the abreks were lurking there made it different from all the rest and gave it a peculiar distinction. It even seemed to him that it was precisely such a spot as ought to contain an ambush of abreks.

Lukashka returned to his horse, and Olyenin followed him.

"We must get an arba loaded with hay," said Luka, "else we shall be killed. Yonder, behind that hillock, stands one already loaded by the Nogai."

The ensign listened to what he said, and the sergeant agreed with him. The hay-cart was brought, and the Cossacks, taking shelter behind it, began to push it in front of them. Olyenin rode off to a hillock, from the top of which he had a view of the whole scene. The hay-cart moved forward. The Cossacks, crouching behind it, pushed it along toward the Chechens — there were nine of them, who sat in a row, knee to knee, and did not yet fire.

There was perfect silence. Suddenly from the Chechen side rang out the strange sounds of a melancholy song, something like Uncle Yeroshka's *Aï-da-la-laï*. The mountaineers knew that there was no escape for them, and, in order to drive away all thoughts of escape, they had fastened themselves together by a strap knee to knee, held their guns in readiness, and were singing their death-song.

The Cossacks, pushing the hay-cart, came nearer and nearer, and Olyenin was momentarily expecting the crash of musketry; but the silence was broken only by the abreks' melancholy song. Suddenly the song was cut short; a quick, sharp report rang out; a bullet buried itself in the pole of the hay-cart; Chechen oaths and shrieks resounded. Shot followed shot, and bullet after bullet was poured into the hay. The Cossacks had not yet returned the fire, and were only five paces away from the mountaineers.

Another instant passed, and the Cossacks, with a yell, leaped out from both sides of the cart. Lukashka was at the head. Olyenin heard a confused sound of gunshots, yells, and groans. He saw smoke and blood, as it seemed to him. Leaving his horse, and quite beside himself, he ran toward the Cossacks. Horror seized his eyes. He could not make it all out, but it was evident to him that all was over. Lukashka, pale as a sheet,

was holding a wounded Chechen's arms and was crying, "Don't kill him, don't kill him! I will take him alive."

It was the same red-headed Chechenets, the brother of the abrek whom Lukashka had killed, — the very one who had come down for his body.

Lukashka was twisting his arms.

Suddenly the Chechenets tore himself away and discharged his pistol. Lukashka fell. Blood spurted out on his side. He leaped up, but fell a second time, cursing in Russian and Tartar. More and more blood appeared on him and under him. The Cossacks hurried to his aid, and began to take off his girdle. One of them, Nazarka, before giving him his attention, found some difficulty in sheathing his saber. Its edge was dripping with blood.

The mountaineers, red-headed, with close-cropped mustaches, lay about, killed and cut in pieces. Only one of them, the very one who had shot Lukashka, though badly wounded, was alive. This one, like a disabled hawk, all blood (the blood was trickling down from under his right eye), gnashing his teeth, pale and desperate, glaring around him with great, angry eyes, squatted on his heels and held his saber, ready still to defend himself to the last. The ensign went up to him, and, pretending to pass by him, with a quick motion fired his pistol into his ear. The Chechenets tried to spring forward, but it was too late and he fell.

The Cossacks, all out of breath, dragged out the dead bodies and took away their weapons. Each one of these red-headed mountaineers was a man, and each had his own individual expression. They carried Lukashka to the arba. He kept cursing in Russian and Tartar.

"You lie! I will choke you! You shan't get out of my hands! Anna seni!" he cried, still struggling. But soon he grew silent through weakness.

Olyenin galloped home. That evening he was told that Lukashka was almost dead, but that a Tartar from across the river had agreed to save him by means of herbs.

The bodies were carried to the town-house. The women and children were hurrying there in crowds, to have a look at them.

Olyenin returned at dusk, and it was long before he could get a clear impression of what he had seen; but in the night the recollection of the previous evening came over him like a flood; he looked out of the window; Maryana was on her way from the house to the shed, attending to her chores. Her mother had gone to the vineyard. The father was at the town-house. Olyenin did not wait until she had finished all her work, but went out to where she was. She was in the khata, and was standing with her back to him. Olyenin had an idea that it was maiden modesty.

"Maryana!" said he, "say, Maryana! may I come in?"

Suddenly she turned around. In her eyes were the traces of tears. There was a lovely melancholy in her face. She looked at him, silent and superb.

Olyenin said:—

"Maryana! I have come...."

"Stop!" said she. Her face did not change, but the tears sprang into her eyes.

"Why are you....? What is the matter?"

"Do you ask?" she exclaimed, in a broken, melancholy voice. "Some Cossacks have been killed, that is what the trouble is."

"Lukashka?" asked Olyenin.

"Go away! what do you want?"

"Maryana!" exclaimed Olyenin, approaching her.

"Never in this world will I have anything to do with you!"

"Maryana, don't say so!" entreated Olyenin.

"Get you gone! you shameless brute!" cried the girl, stamping her foot, and making a threatening gesture toward him. And such loathing, scorn, and anger were expressed in her face that Olyenin suddenly realized that there was no hope for him, and that what he had thought in days gone by, of the distance between him and this woman, was indubitable truth.

He made no reply, but left the khata.

CHAPTER XLII

On returning to his room, he lay on his bed motionless for two hours; then he went to his company commander, and asked leave to join the staff.

* * * * * *

Without bidding good-by to any one, and settling his account with the ensign through Vanyushka, he prepared to depart for the outpost where the regiment was stationed.

Uncle Yeroshka was the only person who came to see him off. They went in, drank together, and drank together again. Just the same as at his departure from Moscow, a hired troïka stood waiting at the door. But Olyenin did not now, as then, make a mental summing up of himself, nor did he tell himself that all that he had thought and done was not *the thing*. Now he made himself no promise of a new life. He loved Maryana more than ever, but now he knew that it would never be possible for her to love him.

"Well, good-by, my father," said Uncle Yeroshka. "You are going to the front; be wise, listen to an old man's advice. If you happen to take part in a foray or anything of the sort — you see, I am an old wolf, I have seen it all — or if there is shooting going on, then do not go near a crowd where there are many people. It 's always the way; if your men get scared, they huddle all together; they think it 's safer where there 's a crowd. But that 's the worst way of all. They always aim at a crowd. I always used to get as far as possible from the rest, go off alone by myself; that 's why I was never wounded by them. But what have n't I seen in my day?"

"Yes, but you carry a bullet in your back," insinuated Vanyusha, who was in the room, packing up.

"That was a little trick of the Cossacks'," replied Yeroshka.

"How the Cossacks?"

"This was the way of it. We were drinking. Vanka

Sitkin was a Cossack; he was quite drunk, when suddenly he blazed away straight at me with his pistol and hit me right there."

"Say, did it hurt?" asked Olyenin. .... "Vanyusha, are we almost ready?" he added.

"Ekh! what are you in such a hurry for? Let me tell you. .... Yes, when he hit me, the bullet did not break the bone, and there it stayed. And I say: 'Here, you've killed me, my brother; did you know it? What are you going to do with me? I am not going to take leave of you in this way. Just bring me a gallon!'"

"Well, did it hurt?" asked Olyenin, for the second time, scarcely listening to this tale.

"Let me tell you. He gave me a gallon of wine. We drank it. And the blood kept flowing all the time. I bled the whole cabin full. Grandsire Burlak says: 'Well, it's all up with the young fellow. Give him another shtof[1] of sweet vodka and then we will settle your punishment.' They brought in still more. We drank and drank." ....

"Well, was it painful for you?" asked Olyenin, for the third time.

"Painful, what's that? Don't interrupt, I don't like it. Let me finish my story. We drank and drank .... kept it up till morning, and then I fell asleep on the stove, dead drunk. When I woke up the next day, I could n't straighten up at all."

"Was it very painful?" insisted Olyenin, thinking that now at last he should get a reply to the question that he had asked so many times.

"Did I tell you it was painful? No, it was n't painful, but I could not straighten up and I could n't walk."

"Well, you lived through it, did n't you?" said Olyenin, without a trace of a smile, so heavy was his heart.

"Yes, I lived through it, but the bullet is there to this day. Just feel it;" and he turned up his shirt and showed his solid back and the scar where the bullet had gone in, near the spine.

[1] Eight *shtofs* make a *vedro*, 2.70 gallons.

"Do you see how it moves about?" said he, evidently finding amusement in this bullet, like a toy. "Here it moves down toward my hind quarters."

"Well, do you think Lukashka will live?" asked Olyenin.

"Well, God knows him. There 's no do*kh*tor yet. They 've sent for one."

"Where will they get one? From Groznaya?" asked Olyenin.

"Nay, my father. I should have hanged all your Russian ones long ago, if I had been Tsar. All they know is how to hack. That 's the way they made our Cossack Baklashef into less than a man: they cut off his leg. They are fools. What 's Baklashef good for now? Nothing, my father. But in the mountains there are do*kh*tors that are do*kh*tors. That was the way with Borchik, my nyanya. Once he was wounded here in the chest during an expedition; your do*kh*tors gave him up, but Saïb came from the mountains and cured him. Herbs are the thing, my father."

"It 's nonsense to talk that way," said Olyenin. "I had better send a surgeon from the staff."

"Nonsense?" repeated the old man, mimicking his tone. .... "Fool! fool! nonsense! send a surgeon! Yes, if your surgeons ever cured, then the Cossacks and the Chechens too would go to you to get cured, but they don't, and your officers and your colonels send for do*kh*tors from the mountains. Everything with you is all false, false!"

Olyenin did not trouble to answer him. It coincided too much with his own opinion that all was false in that world in which he lived and to which he was returning.

"Well, how is Lukashka? You have seen him?" he asked.

"He lies like a dead man. He does not eat or drink; vodka is the only thing that he does not throw up. Well, if he can drink vodka it 's nothing. But, then, I am sorry for the lad. .... He was a fine young fellow, a jigit, just like me. Well, I came near dying that way once. The old women were howling, howling! What a fever there

was in my head! They put me under the holy pictures. And so I lay there, and it seemed to me as if over me on the stove a host of little drummers were beating the tattoo. I yelled at them, but they beat all the faster." — The old man laughed. — "The women brought the head chorister to me; they wanted to bury me! they said of me: 'He's been *worldly*,[1] he has been about with women, he has ruined his soul, he has eaten meat in Lent, he has played on the balalaïka. .... Confess him,' said they. And I began to confess. 'I'm a sinner,' said I.

"The pope made no answer, and I said again: 'I'm a sinner.' He began to ask me about the balalaïka. 'Where is the cursed instrument?' he asked. 'Tell me and have it broken up.' But I said, 'I had n't one.' You see, I had hid it in the net in the izbushka. I knew that they would n't find it. And so they gave me up. And that was the end of it. How I used to scratch on the balalaïka! .... But, as I was just saying," he went on, "you heed my words: go as far as you can from the crowd, or else they will be apt to hit you. I 'm sorry for you, that's a fact. You are good at drinking, and I like you. And you fellows always like to ride out on the sand-dunes. And that was the way one lived here among us: he came from Russia, he was always riding out to the hills, as if a hill were anything wonderful to see. As soon as he sees a hillock, then he gallops up to the top of it. He galloped that way once too often. How happy he was! But a Chechenets shot at him and killed him. Ekh! the Chechens are crack shots when they have a rest for their guns! Better than I am. It was too bad to kill him that mean way. I used to look at your men and be surprised. What stupidity! Hearty good fellows, they used to cluster in a crowd, and they wore red collars. That made a good mark! One would get shot, and down he 'd go. They would pick out another fine fellow, and he 'd be done for! What stupidity!" exclaimed the old man, shaking his head. ....

[1] *Mirshchilsa:* this signifies, among the Old Believers, that a man has mingled freely with the world (*mir*), that is, with unbelievers.

"And so you just go to one side and stand by yourself. On my word, that's the way to do. You see, *he* won't take notice of you. .... So be sure to do that way."

"Well, I am much obliged. Good-by, uncle! If God grants, we may meet again," said Olyenin, getting up and going out into the entry.

The old man still continued to sit on the floor, and did not stir.

"Is that the way you say good-by? Fool! durak!" he exclaimed. "Ékh-ma! what people you are! We have kept one another company for a whole year, we have! 'Good-by' and it's all over! You know I like you, and how I shall miss you! You are so lonely, so lonely! People don't like you very well. I shan't sleep at all for thinking of you, I shall miss you so! As the song goes: —

"*'Tis hard, beloved brother,*
To live on a foreign shore.

And so it is with you!"

"Well, good-by," said Olyenin once more.

The old man arose and gave him his hand; he took it and was about to start.

"Your mouth, give us your mouth!"

The old man clasped his head between his two stout hands, kissed him three times with his moist lips and mustache, and dropped a tear.

"I like you. Good-by."

Olyenin took his place in the telyega.

"What! is that the way you go! Can't you give me something to remember you by, my father? Give me your gun! You have two," said the old man, breaking into genuine sobs.

Olyenin took his gun and gave it to him.

"What makes you give it to that old man?" exclaimed Vanyusha. "It's all wrong! The old beggar! These unconscionable people!" he continued, wrapping himself up in his overcoat and taking his place forward.

"Shut up, you hog," cried the old man, with a laugh. "You see, you're a miser!"

Maryana came out of the khata, gave an indifferent glance at the troïka, and, making a little bow, went back in again.

"*La fil!*" exclaimed Vanyusha, winking, and laughing his stupid laugh.

"Go on!" cried Olyenin, sternly.

"Good-by, father, good-by. I shan't forget you," shouted Yeroshka.

Olyenin glanced around. Uncle Yeroshka was talking with Maryana, evidently about his own affairs, and neither the old man nor the girl was looking at him.

SEVASTOPOL

SEVASTOPOL

SEVASTOPOL IN DECEMBER, 1854

THE flush of morning has but just begun to tinge the sky above Sapun Mountain; the dark blue surface of the sea has already cast aside the shades of night and awaits the first ray to begin a play of merry gleams; cold and mist are wafted from the bay; there is no snow — all is black, but the morning frost pinches the face and crackles underfoot, and the far-off, unceasing roar of the sea, broken now and then by the thunder of the firing in Sevastopol, alone disturbs the calm of the morning. It is dark on board the ships; it has just struck eight bells.

Toward the north the activity of the day begins gradually to replace the nocturnal quiet; here the relief guard has passed clanking their arms, there the doctor is already hastening to the hospital, farther on the soldier has crept out of his earth hut and is washing his sunburnt face in ice-incrusted water, and, turning toward the crimsoning east, crosses himself quickly as he prays to God; here a tall and heavy camel-wagon has dragged creaking to the cemetery, to bury the bloody dead, with whom it is laden nearly to the top. You go to the wharf — a peculiar odor of coal, manure, dampness, and of beef strikes you; thousands of objects of all sorts — wood, meat, gabions, flour, iron, and so forth — lie in heaps about the wharf; soldiers of various regiments, with knapsacks and muskets, without knapsacks and without muskets, throng thither, smoke, quarrel, drag weights aboard the steamer which lies smoking beside the quay; unattached two-oared boats, filled with all sorts of people,

—soldiers, sailors, merchants, women,—land at and leave the wharf.

"To the Grafsky, your excellency? be so good." Two or three retired sailors rise in their boats and offer you their services.

You select the one who is nearest to you, you step over the half-decomposed carcass of a brown horse, which lies there in the mud beside the boat, and reach the stern. You quit the shore. All about you is the sea, already glittering in the morning sun; in front of you is an aged sailor, in a camel's-hair coat, and a young, white-headed boy, who work zealously and in silence at the oars. You gaze at the motley vastness of the vessels, scattered far and near over the bay, and at the small black dots of boats moving about on the shining azure expanse, and at the bright and beautiful buildings of the city, tinted with the rosy rays of the morning sun, which are visible in one direction, and at the foaming white line of the quay, and the sunken ships from which black tips of masts rise sadly here and there, and at the distant fleet of the enemy faintly visible as they rock on the crystal horizon of the sea, and at the streaks of foam on which leap salt bubbles beaten up by the oars; you listen to the monotonous sound of voices which fly to you over the water, and the grand sounds of firing, which, as it seems to you, is increasing in Sevastopol.

It cannot be that, at the thought that you too are in Sevastopol, a certain feeling of manliness, of pride, has not penetrated your soul, and that the blood has not begun to flow more swiftly through your veins.

"Your excellency! you are steering straight into the *Kistentin*,"[1] says your old sailor to you as he turns round to make sure of the direction which you are imparting to the boat; "starboard the helm."

"And all the cannon are still on it," remarks the white-headed boy, casting a glance over the ship as we pass.

"Of course; it's new. Korniloff lived on board of it," said the old man, also glancing at the ship.

"See where it has burst!" says the boy, after a long

[1] The vessel *Constantine*.

silence, looking at a white cloud of spreading smoke which has suddenly appeared high over the South Bay, accompanied by the sharp report of an exploding bomb.

"*He* is firing to-day with his new battery," adds the old man, calmly spitting on his hands. "Now, give way, Mishka! we'll overtake the barge." And your boat moves forward more swiftly over the broad swells of the bay, and you actually do overtake the heavy barge, upon which some bags are piled, and which is unevenly rowed by awkward soldiers, and it touches the Grafsky wharf amid a multitude of boats of every sort which are landing.

Throngs of gray soldiers, common sailors, and a medley of women move noisily along the shore. The women are selling rolls, Russian peasants with samovars are crying hot sbiten[1]; and here upon the first steps are strewn rusted cannon-balls, bombs, grape-shot, and cast-iron cannon of various calibers; a little farther on is a large square, upon which lie huge beams, gun-carriages, sleeping soldiers; there stand horses, wagons, green guns, ammunition-chests, and stacks of arms; soldiers, sailors, officers, women, children, and merchants are moving about; carts are arriving with hay, bags, and casks; here and there Cossacks make their way through, or officers on horseback, or a general in a drozhky. To the right, the street is hemmed in by a barricade, in whose embrasures stand some small cannon, and beside these sits a sailor smoking his pipe. On the left a handsome house with Roman ciphers on the pediment, beneath which stand soldiers and blood-stained litters — everywhere you behold the unpleasant signs of a war encampment. Your first impression is inevitably of the most disagreeable sort. The strange mixture of camp and town life, of a beautiful city and a dirty bivouac, is not only not beautiful, but seems repulsive disorder; it even seems to you that every one is thoroughly frightened, and is fussing about without knowing what he is doing. But look more closely at the faces of these people who

[1] A drink made of water, molasses, laurel-leaves or salvia, which is drunk like tea, especially by the lower classes.

are moving about you, and you will gain an entirely different idea. Look at this little soldier from the baggage-train, for example, who is leading a troïka of brown horses to water, and is purring something to himself so composedly that he evidently will not go astray in this motley crowd, which does not exist for him; but he is fulfilling his duty, whatever that may be, — watering horses or carrying arms, — with just as much composure, self-confidence, and equanimity as though it were taking place in Tula or Saransk. You will read the same expression on the face of this officer who passes by in immaculate white gloves, and in the face of the sailor who is smoking as he sits on the barricade, and in the faces of the working soldiers, waiting with their litters on the steps of the former Club, and in the face of yonder girl, who, fearing to wet her pink gown, skips across the street on the little stones.

Yes! disenchantment certainly awaits you, if you are entering Sevastopol for the first time. In vain will you seek, on even a single countenance, for traces of anxiety, discomposure, or even of enthusiasm, readiness for death, decision, — there is nothing of the sort. You will see every-day people quietly engaged in their every-day callings, so that, possibly, you may reproach yourself for superfluous raptures, you may entertain some doubt as to the justice of the ideas regarding the heroism of the defenders of Sevastopol which you have formed from stories, descriptions, and the sights and sounds on the northern side. But, before you doubt, go upon the bastions, observe the defenders of Sevastopol on the very scene of the defense; or, better still, go straight across into that house, which was formerly the Sevastopol Club,[1] and upon whose steps stand soldiers with litters, — there you will behold the defenders of Sevastopol, there you will behold frightful and sad, great and laughable, but wonderful sights, which elevate the soul.

You enter the great Hall of Assembly. You have

[1] The "Club (or Assembly) of the Nobility"; a sort of casino which exists in all Russian cities. — Tr.

but just opened the door when the sight and smell of forty or fifty seriously wounded men and of those who have undergone amputation — some in cots, the majority upon the floor — suddenly strike you. Trust not to the feeling which detains you upon the threshold of the hall; be not ashamed of having come to *look at* the sufferers, be not ashamed to approach and address them: the unfortunates like to see a sympathizing human face, they like to tell of their sufferings and to hear words of love and interest. You walk along between the beds and seek a face less stern and suffering, which you decide to approach, with the object of conversing.

"Where are you wounded?" you inquire, timidly and with indecision, of an old, gaunt soldier, who, seated on his cot, is watching you with a good-natured glance, and seems to invite you to approach him. I say "you ask timidly," because these sufferings inspire you, over and above the feeling of profound sympathy, with a fear of offending and with a lofty reverence for the man who has undergone them.

"In the leg," replies the soldier; but at the same time, you perceive, by the folds of the coverlet, that he has lost his leg above the knee. "God be thanked now," he adds, — "I shall get my discharge."

"Were you wounded long ago?"

"It was six weeks ago, your honor."

"Does it still pain you?"

"No, there's no pain now; only there's a sort of gnawing in my calf when the weather is bad, but that's nothing."

"How did you come to be wounded?"

"On the fifth bastion, during the first bombardment, your honor. I had just trained a cannon, and was on the point of going away, so, to another embrasure, when *it* struck me in the leg, just as if I had stepped into a hole, — and behold, I had no leg."

"Was it not painful at the first moment?"

"Not at all; only as though something boiling hot had struck my leg."

"Well, and then?"

"And then — nothing; only when they began to draw the skin, it was as though it had been rubbed off. The first thing of all, your excellency, *is not to think at all.* If you don't think about a thing, it amounts to nothing. Men suffer from thinking more than from anything else."

At that moment, a woman in a gray striped dress and a black kerchief bound about her head approaches you.

She joins in your conversation with the sailor, and begins to tell about him, about his sufferings, his desperate condition for the space of four weeks, and how, when he was wounded, he made the litter halt that he might see the volley from our battery, how the Grand Duke spoke to him and gave him twenty-five rubles, and how he said to them that he wanted to go back to the bastion to direct the younger men, even if he could not work himself. As she says all this in a breath, the woman glances now at you, now at the sailor, who has turned away as though he did not hear her and plucks some lint from his pillow, and her eyes sparkle with peculiar enthusiasm.

"This is my housewife, your honor!" the sailor says to you, with an expression which seems to say, "You must excuse her. Every one knows it's a woman's way — she 's talking nonsense."

You begin to understand the defenders of Sevastopol. For some reason, you feel ashamed of yourself in the presence of this man. You would like to say a very great deal to him, in order to express to him your sympathy and admiration; but you find no words, or you are dissatisfied with those which come into your head, — and you do reverence in silence before this taciturn, unconscious grandeur and firmness of soul, this modesty in the face of his own merits.

"Well, God grant you a speedy recovery," you say to him, and you halt before another invalid, who is lying on the floor and appears to be awaiting death in intolerable agony.

He is a blond man with pale, swollen face. He is

lying on his back, with his left arm thrown out, in a position which is expressive of cruel suffering. His parched, open mouth with difficulty emits his stertorous breathing; his blue, leaden eyes are rolled up, and from beneath the coverlet the remains of his right arm, enveloped in bandages, protrude. The oppressive odor of a corpse strikes you forcibly, and the consuming, internal fire which has penetrated every limb of the sufferer seems to penetrate you also.

"Is he unconscious?" you inquire of the woman, who comes up to you and gazes at you tenderly as at a relative.

"No, he can still hear, but he's very bad," she adds in a whisper. "I gave him some tea to-day, — what if he is a stranger, one must still have pity! — and he hardly tasted it."

"How do you feel?" you ask him.

The wounded man turns his eyeballs at the sound of your voice, but he neither sees nor understands you.

"There's a gnawing at my heart."

A little farther on, you see an old soldier changing his linen. His face and body are of a sort of cinnamon-brown color, and gaunt as a skeleton. He has no arm at all; it has been cut off at the shoulder. He is sitting with an alert air, he is convalescent; but you see, by his dull, corpse-like gaze, his frightful gauntness, and the wrinkles on his face, that he is a being who has suffered for the best part of his life.

On the other side, you behold in a cot the pale, suffering, and delicate face of a woman, upon whose cheek plays a feverish flush.

"That's our little sailor lass who was struck in the leg by a bomb on the 5th," your guide tells you. "She was carrying her husband's dinner to him in the bastion."

"Has it been amputated?"

"They cut it off above the knee."

Now, if your nerves are strong, pass through the door on the left. In yonder room they are applying bandages and performing operations. There you will see doctors with their arms blood-stained above the elbow,

and with pale, stern faces, busied about a cot, upon which, with eyes widely opened, and uttering, as in delirium, incoherent, sometimes simple and touching, words, lies a wounded man under the influence of chloroform. The doctors are busy with the repulsive but beneficent work of amputation. You see the sharp, curved knife enter the healthy, white body, you see the wounded man suddenly regain consciousness with a piercing cry and curses, you see the assistant surgeon fling the amputated arm into a corner, you see another wounded man, lying in a litter in the same apartment, shrink convulsively and groan as he gazes at the operation upon his comrade, not so much from physical pain as from the moral torture of anticipation.— You behold frightful, soul-stirring scenes; you behold war, not from its conventional, beautiful, and brilliant side, with music and drum-beat, with fluttering flags and prancing generals, but you behold war in its real aspect— in blood, in suffering, in death.

On emerging from this house of pain, you will infallibly experience a sensation of pleasure, you will inhale the fresh air more fully, you will feel satisfaction in the consciousness of your health; but, at the same time, you will draw from the sight of these sufferings a consciousness of your nothingness, and you will go calmly and without any indecision to the bastion.

"What do the death and sufferings of such an insignificant worm as I signify in comparison with so many deaths and such great sufferings?" But the sight of the clear sky, the brilliant sun, the fine city, the open church, and the soldiers moving about in various directions soon restores your mind to its normal condition of frivolity, petty cares, and absorption in the present alone.

Perhaps you meet the funeral procession of some officer coming from the church, with rose-colored coffin, and music and fluttering church banners; perhaps the sounds of firing from the bastion reaches your ear, but this does not lead you back to your former thoughts; the funeral seems to you a very fine military spectacle,

and you do not connect with this spectacle, or with these sounds, any clear idea of suffering and death, as you did at the point where the bandaging was going on.

Passing the barricade and the church, you come to the part of the city most animated with inner life. On either hand hang the signs of shops and inns. Merchants, women in bonnets and kerchiefs, dandified officers, — everything speaks to you of the firmness of spirit, of the independence and the security, of the inhabitants.

Enter the public house on the right if you wish to hear the conversations of sailors and officers; stories of the preceding night are sure to be in progress there, — of Fenka, and the affair of the 24th, and of the dearness and badness of cutlets, and of such and such a comrade who has been killed.

"Devil take it, how bad things are with us to-day!" ejaculates the bass voice of a beardless naval officer, with white brows and lashes, in a green knitted sash.

"Where?" asks another.

"In the fourth bastion," replies the young officer, and you are certain to look at the white-lashed officer with great attention, and even with some respect, at the words, "in the fourth bastion." His excessive ease of manner, the way he flourishes his hands, his loud laugh, and his voice, which seem to you insolent, reveal to you that peculiar boastful frame of mind which some very young men acquire after danger; nevertheless, you think he is about to tell you how bad the condition of things on the fourth bastion is because of the bombs and balls. Nothing of the sort! things are bad because it is muddy. "It's impossible to pass through the battery," says he, pointing at his boots, which are covered with mud above the calf. "And my best gun-captain was killed to-day; he was struck plump in the forehead," says another. "Who's that? Mitiukhin?" "No! .... What now, are they going to give me any veal? the villains!" he adds to the servant of the inn. "Not Mitiukhin, but Abramoff. Such a fine young fellow — he was in the sixth sally."

At another corner of the table, over a dish of cutlets with peas, and a bottle of sour Crimean wine called "Bordeaux," sit two infantry officers; one with a red collar, who is young and has two stars on his overcoat, is telling the other, with a black collar and no stars, about the affair at Alma. The former has already drunk a good deal, and it is evident, from the breaks in his narrative, from his undecided glance expressive of doubt as to whether he is believed, and chiefly from the altogether too prominent part which he has played in it all, and from the excessive horror of it all, that he is widely departing from a strict statement of the truth. But these tales, which you will hear for a long time to come in every corner of Russia, are nothing to you; you prefer to go to the bastions, especially to the fourth, of which you have been told so many and such diverse things. When any one says that he has been in the fourth bastion, he says it with a peculiar air of pride and satisfaction; when any one says, "I am going to the fourth bastion," either a little agitation or an excess of indifference is infallibly perceptible in him; when any one wants to jest about another, he says, "You must be stationed in the fourth bastion;" when you meet litters and inquire whence they come, the answer is generally, "From the fourth bastion." On the whole, two totally different opinions exist with regard to this terrible bastion: one is held by those who have never been in it, and who are convinced that the fourth bastion is a regular grave for every one who enters it; and the other by those who live in it, like the white-lashed midshipman, and who, when they mention the fourth bastion, will tell you whether it is dry or muddy there, whether it is warm or cold in the mud hut, and so forth.

During the half-hour which you have passed in the public house, the weather has changed; the fog which before spread over the sea has collected into damp, heavy, gray clouds, and has veiled the sun; a kind of melancholy, frozen mist sprinkles from above, and wets the roofs, the sidewalks, and the soldiers' overcoats.

Passing by yet another barricade, you emerge from

the door at the right and ascend the principal street. Behind this barricade, the houses are unoccupied on both sides of the street, there are no sign-boards, the doors are covered with boards, the windows are broken in; here the corners of the wall are broken away, there the roofs are pierced. The buildings seem to be old, to have undergone every sort of vicissitude and deprivation characteristic of veterans, and appear to gaze proudly and somewhat scornfully upon you. You stumble over the cannon-balls which strew the way, and into holes filled with water, which have been excavated in the stony ground by the bombs. In the street you may meet and overtake bodies of soldiers, scouts, officers; now and then you encounter a woman or a child, but it is no longer a woman in a bonnet, but a sailor's wife in an old fur cloak and soldier's boots. As you proceed along the street, and descend a small declivity, you observe that there are no longer any houses about you, but only some strange heaps of ruined stones, boards, clay, and beams; ahead of you, upon a steep hill, you perceive a black, muddy expanse, intersected by canals, and this that is in front is the fourth bastion. Here you meet still fewer people, no women are visible, the soldiers walk briskly, you come across drops of blood on the road, and you will certainly encounter there four soldiers with a stretcher and upon the stretcher a pale yellowish face and a blood-stained overcoat. If you inquire, "Where is he wounded?" the bearers will say angrily, without turning toward you, "In the leg," or "the arm," if he is slightly wounded; or they will preserve a gloomy silence if no head is visible on the stretcher and he is already dead or badly hurt.

The shriek of a cannon-ball or a bomb close by surprises you unpleasantly, as you ascend the hill. You understand all at once, and quite differently from what you have before, the significance of those sounds of shots which you heard in the city. A quietly cheerful memory flashes suddenly before your fancy; your own personality begins to occupy you more than your observations; your attention to all that surrounds you diminishes, and a cer-

tain disagreeable feeling of indecision suddenly overmasters you. In spite of this base voice, which suddenly speaks within you, at the sight of danger, you force it to be silent, especially when you glance at a soldier who runs laughing past you at a trot, waving his hands, and slipping down the hill in the mud, and you involuntarily expand your chest, throw up your head a little higher, and scramble up the slippery, clayey hill. As soon as you pick your way a short distance up the hill, rifle-balls begin to whiz to the right and left of you, and, possibly, you begin to reflect whether you will not take to the trench which runs parallel with the road; but this trench is full of such yellow, liquid, foul-smelling mud, more than knee-deep, that you will infallibly choose the path on the hill, the more so as you see that *every one uses the path.* After traversing a couple of hundred paces, you emerge upon a muddy expanse, all plowed up, and surrounded on all sides by gabions, earthworks, platforms, earth-huts, upon which great cast-iron guns stand, and cannon-balls lie in symmetrical heaps. All these seem to be heaped up without any aim, connection, or order. Here in the battery sit a knot of sailors; there in the middle of the square, half buried in mud, lies a broken cannon; farther on, a foot-soldier, with his gun, is marching through the battery, and dragging his feet with difficulty through the sticky soil. But everywhere, on all sides, in every spot, you see broken dishes, unexploded bombs, cannon-balls, signs of encampment, all sunk in the liquid, viscous mud. You seem to hear not far from you the thud of a cannon-ball; on all sides, you seem to hear the varied sounds of bullets humming like bees, whistling sharply, or in a whine like a cord — you hear the frightful roar of the fusillade, which shakes you all through and seems to you, in some way, horribly dreadful.

"So this is it, the fourth bastion! This is that terrible, really frightful place!" you think to yourself, and you experience a little sensation of pride, and a very large sensation of suppressed terror. But you are mistaken: this is not the fourth bastion. It is the Yazonoff

redoubt — a place which is, in comparison, very safe, and not at all dreadful.

In order to reach the fourth bastion, you turn to the right, through this narrow trench, through which the foot-soldier, bent double, has gone. In this trench you will perhaps meet stretchers again, sailors, and soldiers with shovels; you will see the superintendent of the mines, mud huts, into which only two men can crawl by bending down, and there you will see scouts of the Black Sea battalions, who are changing their shoes, eating, smoking their pipes, and living; and you will still see everywhere that same stinking mud, traces of a camp, and cast-off iron *débris* in every possible form. Proceeding yet three hundred paces, you will emerge again upon a battery, — on an open space, all cut up into holes and surrounded by gabions, covered with earth, cannon on platforms, and earthworks. Here you will perhaps see five sailors playing cards under the shelter of the breastworks, and a naval officer, who, perceiving that you are a newcomer, and curious, will with pleasure show you his household arrangements, and everything which may be of interest to you.

This officer rolls himself a cigarette of yellow paper, with so much composure as he sits on a gun, walks so calmly from one embrasure to another, converses with you so quietly, without the slightest affectation, that, in spite of the bullets which hum above you even more thickly than before, you become cool yourself, question attentively, and listen to the officer's replies.

This officer will tell you, but only if you ask him, about the bombardment on the 5th; he will tell you how only one gun in his battery could be used, and out of all the gunners who served it only eight remained, and how, nevertheless, on the next morning, the 6th, he fired all the guns; he will tell you how a bomb fell upon a sailor's earth hut on the 5th, and laid low eleven men; he will point out to you, from the embrasures, the enemy's batteries and intrenchments, which are not more than thirty or forty fathoms distant from this point. I fear, however, that, under the influence of the whizzing bullets,

you may thrust yourself out of the embrasure in order to view the enemy; you will see nothing, and, if you do see anything, you will be very much surprised that that white stony rampart, which is so near you and from which white smoke rises in puffs, — that that white is the enemy — *he*, as the soldiers and sailors say.

It is even quite possible that the naval officer will want to discharge a shot or two in your presence, out of vanity or simply for his own pleasure. "Send the captain and his crew to the cannon;" and fourteen sailors step up briskly and merrily to the gun and load it — one thrusting his pipe into his pocket, another one chewing a biscuit, still another clattering his heels on the platform.

Observe the faces, the bearing, the movements, of these men. In every wrinkle of that sunburned face, with its high cheek-bones, in every muscle, in the breadth of those shoulders, in the thickness of those legs shod in huge boots, in every calm, firm, deliberate gesture, these chief traits which constitute the power of Russia — simplicity and straightforwardness — are visible; but here, on every face, it seems to you that the danger, animosity, and the sufferings of war have, in addition to these principal characteristics, left traces of consciousness of personal worth, emotion, and exalted thought.

All at once a frightful roar, which shakes, not your organs of hearing alone, but your whole being, startles you so that you tremble all over. Then you hear the receding shriek of the shot as it pursues its course, and the dense smoke of the powder envelops the platform and the black figures of the sailors who are moving about upon it. You hear various remarks of the sailors in reference to this shot, and you see their animation, and the exhibition of a feeling which you had not expected to behold, perhaps — a feeling of malice, of revenge against the enemy, which lies hidden in the soul of each man. "It landed in the embrasure itself; it seems to have killed two men — see, they've carried them off!" you hear their joyful exclamation. "And now they are angry; they'll fire at us directly," says some one; and, in fact, shortly

after you see a flash in front and smoke; the sentry, who is standing on the breastwork, shouts "Can-non!" And then the ball shrieks past you, strikes the earth heavily, and scatters a shower of dirt and stones about it.

The ball enrages the commander of the battery; he orders a second and a third gun to be loaded, the enemy also begins to reply to us, and you experience a sensation of interest, you hear and see interesting things. Again the sentry shouts, "Can-non!" and you hear the same report and blow, the same shower; or he shouts "Mortar!" and you hear the monotonous, even rather pleasant, whistle of the bomb, with which it is difficult to connect the thought of horror; you hear this whistle approaching you, and increasing in swiftness; then you see the black sphere, the impact on the ground, the resounding explosion of the bomb, which can be felt. With the whistle and shriek, splinters fly again, stones whiz through the air, and mud showers over you. At these sounds you experience a strange feeling of enjoyment, and, at the same time, of terror. At the moment when you know that the projectile is flying toward you, it will infallibly occur to you that this shot will kill you; but the feeling of self-love sustains you, and no one perceives the knife which is cutting your heart. But when the shot has flown past without touching you, you revive, and a certain cheerful, inexpressibly pleasant feeling overpowers you, but only for a moment, so that you discover a peculiar sort of charm in danger, in this game of life and death; you want cannon-balls or bombs to strike nearer and nearer round about you.

But again the sentry has shouted in his loud, thick voice, "Mortar!" again there is a shriek, and a bomb bursts, but with this noise the groan of a man startles you. You approach the wounded man at the same moment with the bearers; he has a strange, inhuman aspect, covered as he is with blood and mud. A part of the sailor's breast has been torn away. During the first moments, there is visible on his mud-stained face only fear and a certain simulated, premature expression of suffering, peculiar to men in that condition; but, at the

moment when the stretcher is brought to him and he places himself upon it on his sound side, you observe that this expression is replaced by an expression of a sort of exaltation and lofty, inexpressible thought. His eyes shine more brilliantly, his teeth are clenched, his head is held higher with an effort, and, as they lift him up, he stops the bearers and says to his comrades, with difficulty and in a trembling voice, "Comrades, forgive!" He tries to say something more, and it is plain that he wants to say something touching, but he repeats once more, "Comrades, forgive!"

At that moment, one of his fellow-sailors steps up to him, puts the cap on the head which the wounded man holds toward him, and, waving his hand indifferently, returns calmly to his gun. "That's the way with seven or eight men every day," says the naval officer to you, in reply to the expression of horror which has appeared upon your countenance, as he yawns, and rolls a cigarette of yellow paper.

* * * * * *

Thus you have seen the defenders of Sevastopol, on the very scene of the defense, and you go back paying no attention, for some reason or other, to the cannon-balls and bullets, which continue to shriek the whole way until you reach the ruined theater, — you proceed with composure, and with your soul in a state of exaltation.

The principal and cheering conviction which you have brought away is the conviction of the impossibility of the Russian people wavering anywhere whatever — and this impossibility you have discerned not in the multitude of traverses, breastworks, artfully interlaced trenches, mines, and ordnance, piled one upon the other, of which you have comprehended nothing; but you have discerned it in the eyes, the speech, the manners, in what is called the spirit of the defenders of Sevastopol. What they are doing they do so simply, with so little effort and exertion, that you are convinced that they can do a hundred times more — that they can

do anything. You understand that the feeling which makes them work is not that feeling of pettiness, ambition, forgetfulness, which you have yourself experienced, but a different sentiment, one more powerful, and one which has made of them men who live with their ordinary composure under the fire of cannon, amid hundreds of chances of death, instead of the one to which all men are subject, and who live under these conditions amid incessant labor, poverty, and dirt. Men cannot accept these frightful conditions for the sake of a cross or a title, nor because of threats; there must be another, a lofty incentive, as the cause. And this cause is the feeling which rarely appears, of which a Russian is ashamed, that which lies at the bottom of each man's soul — love for his country.

Only now have the tales of the early days of the siege of Sevastopol, when there were no fortifications there, no army, no physical possibility of holding it, and when, nevertheless, there was not the slightest doubt that it would not surrender to the enemy, — of the days when that hero worthy of ancient Greece, Korniloff, said, as he made the rounds of the troops: "We will die, boys, but we will not surrender Sevastopol;" and our Russians, who are not fitted to be phrase-makers, replied: "We will die! hurrah!" — only now have tales of that time ceased to be for you the most beautiful historical legends, and have become real facts and worthy of belief. You comprehend clearly, you figure to yourself, those men whom you have just seen, as the very heroes who, in those grievous times, have not fallen, but have been exalted in spirit, and have joyfully prepared for death, not for the sake of the city, but of their native land. This epos of Sevastopol, whose hero was the Russian people, will leave mighty traces in Russia for a long time to come.

Night is already falling. The sun, just before its setting, has emerged from the gray clouds which cover the sky, and has suddenly illuminated with a crimson glow the purple vapors, the greenish sea covered with ships and boats rocking on the regular swell, and the

white buildings of the city, and the people who are moving through its streets. Sounds of some old waltz played by the regimental band on the boulevard, and the sounds of firing from the bastions, which echo them strangely, are borne across the water.

SEVASTOPOL, April 25, 1855.

SEVASTOPOL IN MAY, 1855

CHAPTER I

SIX months have already passed since the first cannon-ball whistled from the bastions of Sevastopol, and plowed the earth in the works of the enemy, and since that day thousands of bombs, cannon-balls, and rifle-balls have been flying incessantly from the bastions into the trenches and from the trenches into the bastions, and the angel of death has never ceased to hover over them.

Thousands of men have been disappointed in their ambitions; thousands have succeeded in satisfying theirs, in becoming swollen with pride; thousands repose in the embrace of death. How many red coffins and canvas palls there have been! And still the same sounds are echoed from the bastions, and still on clear evenings the French peer from their camp, with involuntary tremor, at the yellow, furrowed bastions of Sevastopol, at the black forms of our sailors moving about upon them, and count the embrasures and the iron cannon which project angrily from them; the pilot still gazes through his telescope, from the heights of the telegraph station, at the motley figures of the French at their batteries, at their tents, at the columns moving over the green hill, and at the puffs of smoke which issue forth from the trenches, — and a crowd of men, formed of divers races, still streams in throngs from various quarters, with the same ardor as ever, and with desires differing even more greatly than their races, toward this fateful spot. And the question, unsolved by the diplomats, has still not been solved by powder and blood.

CHAPTER II

On the boulevard of the besieged city of Sevastopol, not far from the pavilion, the regimental band was playing, and throngs of military men and of women moved gayly through the streets. The brilliant sun of spring had risen in the morning over the works of the English, had passed over the bastions, then over the city, over the Nikolaeff barracks, and, illuminating all with equal cheer, had now sunk into the blue and distant sea, which was lighted with a silvery gleam as it heaved in regular swells.

A tall, rather round-shouldered infantry officer, who was drawing upon his hand a glove which was presentable, if not entirely white, came out of the small door of one of the small naval huts, built on the left side of the Morskaya[1] Street, and, staring thoughtfully at the ground, took his way up the slope to the boulevard.

The expression of this officer's homely countenance did not indicate any great mental capacity, but rather simplicity, judgment, honor, and a tendency to steadiness. He was badly built, not quite graceful, and he seemed to be constrained in his movements. He was dressed in a little worn cap, a cloak of a rather peculiar shade of lilac, from beneath whose edge the gold of a watch-chain was visible; in trousers with straps, and brilliantly polished calfskin boots. He must have been either a German — if his features had not clearly indicated his purely Russian descent — or an adjutant, or a regimental quartermaster (only in that case he would have had spurs), or an officer who had exchanged from the cavalry for the period of the campaign, or possibly from the Guards. He was, in fact, an officer who had exchanged from the cavalry, and, as he ascended the boulevard, he was meditating upon a letter which he had just received from a former comrade, now retired; a landowner in the Government of T., and his wife, pale, blue-eyed Natasha, his great friend. He

[1] Sea.

recalled one passage of the letter, in which his comrade said: —

"When our *Invalid*[1] arrives, Pupka [this was the name by which the retired uhlan called his wife] rushes headlong into the vestibule, seizes the paper, and runs with it to the *vis-à-vis* seat in *the arbor, in the drawing-room* (in which, if you remember, you and I passed such delightful winter evenings when the regiment was stationed in our town), and reads *your* heroic deeds with such ardor as it is impossible for you to imagine. She often speaks of you. 'There is Mikhaïloff,' she says, 'he's such a *love of a man.* I am ready to kiss him when I see him. He fights on the bastions, and will surely receive the Cross of St. George, and he will be talked about in the newspapers ....' and so on, and so on .... so that I am really beginning to be jealous of you."

In another place he writes: "The papers reach us frightfully late, and, although there is plenty of news conveyed by word of mouth, not all of it can be trusted. For instance, the *young ladies with the music,* acquaintances of yours, were saying yesterday that Napoleon was already captured by our Cossacks, and that he had been sent to Petersburg; but you will comprehend how much I believe of this. Moreover, a traveler from Petersburg told us (he has been sent on special business by the minister, is a very agreeable person, and, now that there is no one in town, he is more of a *resource* to us than you can well imagine ....) — well, he declares it to be a fact that our troops have occupied Eupatoria, *so that the French have no communication whatever with Balaklava,* and that in this engagement two hundred of ours were killed, but that the French lost as many as fifteen thousand. My wife was in such raptures over this that she *caroused* all night, and she declares that her instinct tells her that you certainly took part in that affair, and that you distinguished yourself."

In spite of these words, and of the expressions which I have purposely put in italics, and the whole tone of the letter, Staff-Captain Mikhaïloff recalled, with inex-

[1] *Military Gazette.*

pressibly sad delight, his pale friend in the provinces, and how she had sat with him in the arbor in the evening, and talked about *sentiment*, and he thought of his good comrade, the uhlan, and of how the latter had grown angry and had lost the game when they used to play cards for kopek stakes in his study, and how the wife had laughed at him .... he recalled the friendship of these two people for himself (perhaps it seemed to him to lie chiefly on the side of his pale feminine friend); all these faces with their surroundings flitted before his mind's eye, in a wonderfully sweet, consolingly rosy light, and, smiling at his reminiscences, he placed his hand on the pocket which contained the letter so *dear* to him.

From reminiscences Captain Mikharloff involuntarily proceeded to dreams and hopes. "And what will be the joy and amazement of Natasha," he thought, as he paced along the narrow lane, "..... when she suddenly reads in the *Invalid* a description of how I was the first to climb upon the cannon, and that I have received the George! I shall certainly be promoted to a full captaincy, by virtue of that old recommendation. Then I may very easily get the grade of major in the line, this very year, because many of our fellows have already been killed, and many more will be in this campaign. And after that there will be more affairs on hand, and a regiment will be intrusted to me, since I am an experienced man .... lieutenant-colonel .... the Order of St. Anna on my neck .... colonel! .... " and he was already a general, granting an interview to Natasha, the widow of his comrade, who, according to his dreams, would die about that time, when the sounds of the music on the boulevard penetrated more distinctly to his ears, the crowds of people caught his eye, and he found himself on the boulevard, a staff-captain of infantry as before.

CHAPTER III

He went, first of all, to the pavilion, near which were standing the musicians, for whom other soldiers of the same regiment were holding the notes, in the absence of stands, and about whom a ring of cadets, nurses, and children had formed, intent rather on seeing than on hearing. Around the pavilion stood, sat, or walked sailors, adjutants, and officers in white gloves. Along the grand avenue of the boulevard paced officers of every sort, and women of every description, rarely in bonnets, mostly with kerchiefs on their heads (some had neither bonnets nor kerchiefs), but not one of them was old, and it was worthy of note that all were young. Beyond, in the shady and fragrant alleys of white acacia, isolated groups walked and sat.

No one was especially delighted to encounter Captain Mikhaïloff on the boulevard, with the exception, possibly, of Obzhogoff, a captain in his regiment, and Captain Suslikoff, who pressed his hand warmly; but the former was in camel's-hair trousers, without gloves, a threadbare coat, and his face was very red and covered with perspiration; and the second shouted so loudly and with so much freedom that it was mortifying to walk with them, particularly in the presence of the officers in white gloves (with one of whom, an adjutant, Staff-Captain Mikhaïloff exchanged bows; and he might have bowed to another staff-officer, since he had met him twice at the house of a mutual acquaintance). Besides, what pleasure was it to him to promenade with these two gentlemen, Obzhogoff and Suslikoff, when without that he met them and shook hands with them six times a day? It was not for this that he had come.

He would have liked to approach the adjutant with whom he had exchanged bows, and to enter into conversation with these officers, not for the sake of letting Captains Obzhogoff and Suslikoff and Lieutenant Pashtetzky and others see him talking with them, but sim-

ply because they were agreeable people, and, what was more, they knew all the news, and would have told it.

But why is Captain Mikhaïloff afraid, and why cannot he make up his mind to approach them? "What if they should, all at once, refuse to recognize me," he thinks, "or, having bowed to me, what if they continue their conversation among themselves, as though I did not exist, or walk away from me entirely, and leave me standing there alone among the *aristocrats*." The word aristocrats (in the sense of a higher, select circle, in any rank of life) has for some time past acquired great popularity with us, in Russia, where it would seem to have no reason for existing, and has penetrated into every locality and into every class of society whither vanity has penetrated (and into what conditions of time and circumstances does this wretched tendency not penetrate?)—among merchants, among officials, writers, and officers, to Saratoff, to Mamaduishi, to Vinnitzui, everywhere where men exist.

To Captain Obzhogoff, Staff-Captain Mikhaïloff was an *aristocrat*. To Staff-Captain Mikhaïloff, Adjutant Kalugin was an *aristocrat*, because he was an adjutant, and was on such a footing with the other adjutants as to call them "thou"! To Adjutant Kalugin, Count Nordoff was an *aristocrat*, because he was an adjutant on the emperor's staff.

Vanity! vanity! and vanity everywhere, even on the brink of the grave, and among men ready to die for the highest convictions, vanity! It must be that it is a characteristic trait, and a peculiar malady of our century. Why was nothing ever heard among the men of former days, of this passion, any more than of the small-pox or the cholera? Why, in our age, are there but three sorts of people: those who accept the principle of vanity as a fact whose existence is inevitable, and, therefore, just; those who accept it as an unfortunate but invincible condition; and those who, unconsciously, act with slavish subservience under its influence? Why did Homer and Shakespeare talk of love, of glory, of suffer-

ing, while the literature of our age is nothing but an endless narrative of snobs and vanity?

The staff-captain twice walked in indecision past the group of *his aristocrats*, and the third time he exerted an effort over himself and went up to them. This group consisted of four officers: Adjutant Kalugin, an acquaintance of Mikhaïloff's, Adjutant Prince Galtzin, who was something of an aristocrat even for Kalugin himself, Colonel Neferdoff, one of the so-called *hundred and twenty-two* men of the world (who had entered the service for this campaign, from the retired list), and Captain of Cavalry Praskukhin, also one of the hundred and twenty-two. Luckily for Mikhaïloff, Kalugin was in a very fine humor (the general had just been talking to him in a very confidential way, and Prince Galtzin, who had just arrived from Petersburg, was stopping with him); he did not consider it beneath his dignity to give his hand to Captain Mikhaïloff, which Praskukhin, however, could not make up his mind to do, though he had met Mikhaïloff very frequently on the bastion, had drunk the latter's wine and vodka, and was even indebted to him twenty rubles and a half at preference. As he did not yet know Prince Galtzin very well, he did not wish to convict himself, in the latter's presence, of an acquaintance with a simple staff-captain of infantry. He bowed slightly to the latter.

"Well, Captain," said Kalugin, "when are we to go to the bastion again? Do you remember how we met each other on the Schvartz redoubt.... it was hot there, hey?"

"Yes, it was hot," said Mikhaïloff, recalling how he had, that night, as he was making his way along the trenches to the bastion, encountered Kalugin, who was walking along like a hero, valiantly clanking his sword. "I really ought to go there to-morrow, according to present arrangements; but we have a sick man," pursued Mikhaïloff, "one officer, as...."

He was about to relate how it was not his turn, but, as the commander of the eighth company was ill, and the company had only a cornet left, he had regarded it

as his duty to offer himself in the place of Lieutenant Nepshisetzky, and was, therefore, going to the bastion to-day. But Kalugin did not hear him out.

"I have a feeling that something is going to happen within a few days," he said to Prince Galtzin.

"And won't there be something to-day?" asked Mikhaïloff, glancing first at Kalugin, then at Galtzin.

No one made him any reply. Prince Galtzin merely frowned a little, sent his eyes past the other's cap, and, after maintaining silence for a moment, said: —

"That's a magnificent girl in the red kerchief. You don't know her, do you, Captain?"

"She lives near my quarters; she is the daughter of a sailor," replied the staff-captain.

"Come on; let's have a good look at her."

And Prince Galtzin linked one arm in that of Kalugin, the other in that of the staff-captain, being convinced in advance that he could afford the latter no greater gratification, which was, in fact, quite true.

The staff-captain was superstitious, and considered it a great sin to occupy himself with women before a battle; but on this occasion he feigned to be a vicious man, which Prince Galtzin and Kalugin evidently did not believe, and which greatly amazed the girl in the red kerchief, who had more than once observed how the staff-captain blushed as he passed her little window. Praskukhin walked behind, and kept touching Prince Galtzin with his hand, and making various remarks in the French tongue; but as a fourth person could not walk on the small path, he was obliged to walk alone, and it was only on the second round that he took the arm of the brave and well-known naval officer *Servyagin*, who had stepped up and spoken to him, and who was also desirous of joining the circle of *aristocrats*. And the gallant and famous man joyfully thrust his honest and muscular hand through the elbow of a man who was known to all, and even well known to *Servyagin* himself, as not too *nice*. When Praskukhin, explaining to the prince his acquaintance with *that sailor*, whispered to him that the latter was well known for his

bravery, Prince Galtzin, who had been on the fourth bastion on the previous evening, had seen a bomb burst twenty paces from him, considered himself no less a hero than this gentleman, and thought that many a reputation is acquired undeservedly, paid no attention whatever to Servyagin.

It was so agreeable to Staff-Captain Mikharloff to walk about in this company that he forgot the *dear* letter from T——, and the gloomy thoughts which had assailed him in connection with his impending departure for the bastion. He remained with them until they began to talk exclusively among themselves, avoiding his glances, thereby giving him to understand that he might go, and finally deserted him entirely. But the staff-captain was content, nevertheless, and as he passed Yunker[1] Baron Pesth, who had been particularly haughty and self-conceited since the preceding night, which was the first that he had spent in the bomb-proof of the fifth bastion, and consequently considered himself a hero, he was not in the least offended at the suspiciously haughty expression with which the yunker straightened himself up and doffed his hat before him.

CHAPTER IV

But as soon as the staff-captain crossed the threshold of his quarters, entirely different thoughts entered his mind. He looked around his little chamber, with its uneven earth floor, and saw the windows all awry, pasted over with paper, his old bed, with a rug nailed over it, upon which was depicted a lady on horseback, and over which hung two Tula pistols, the dirty couch of a cadet who lived with him, and which was covered with a chintz coverlet; he saw his Nikita, who, with untidy, tallowed hair, rose from the floor, scratching his head; he saw his

[1] A civilian, without military training, attached to a regiment as a non-commissioned officer, who may eventually become a regular officer.

ancient cloak, his extra pair of boots, and a little bundle, from which peeped a bit of cheese and the neck of a porter bottle filled with vodka, which had been prepared for his use on the bastion, and all at once he remembered that he was obliged to go with his company for the whole night to the fortifications.

"It is certainly foreordained that I am to be killed to-night," thought the staff-captain .... "I feel it. And the principal point is that I need not have gone, but that I offered myself. And the man who thrusts himself forward is always killed. And what's the matter with that accursed Nepshisetsky? It is quite possible that he is not sick at all; and they will kill another man for his sake, they will infallibly kill him. However, if they don't kill me, I shall be promoted probably. I saw how delighted the regimental commander was when I asked him to allow me to go, if Lieutenant Nepshisetsky was ill. If I don't turn out a major, then I shall certainly get the Vladimir Cross. This is the thirteenth time that I have been to the bastion. Ah, the thirteenth is an unlucky number. They will surely kill me, I feel that I shall be killed; but some one had to go, it was impossible for the lieutenant of the corps to go. And, whatever happens, the honor of the regiment, the honor of the army, depends on it. It was my *duty* to go .... yes, my sacred duty. But I have a foreboding."

The staff-captain forgot that this was not the first time that a similar foreboding had assailed him, in a greater or less degree, when it had been necessary to go to the bastion, and he did not know that every one who sets out on an affair experiences this foreboding with more or less force. Having calmed himself with this conception of duty, which was especially and strongly developed in the staff-captain, he seated himself at the table, and began to write a farewell letter to his father. Ten minutes later, having finished his letter, he rose from the table, his eyes wet with tears, and, mentally reciting all the prayers he knew, he set about dressing. His coarse, drunken servant indolently handed him his new

coat (the old one, which the captain generally wore when going to the bastion, was not mended).

"Why is not my coat mended? You never do anything but sleep, you good-for-nothing!" said Mikhaïloff, angrily.

"Sleep!" grumbled Nikita. "You run like a dog all day long; perhaps you stop — but you must not sleep, even then!"

"You are drunk again, I see."

"I did n't get drunk on your money, so you need n't scold."

"Hold your tongue, blockhead!" shouted the captain, who was ready to strike the man. He had been absent-minded at first, but now he was at last out of patience, and embittered by the rudeness of Nikita, whom he loved, even spoiled, and who had lived with him for twelve years.

"Blockhead? Blockhead?" repeated the servant. "Why do you call me a blockhead, sir? Is this a time for that sort of thing? It is not good to curse."

Mikhaïloff recalled whither he was on the point of going, and felt ashamed of himself.

"You are enough to put a saint out of patience, Nikita," he said, in a gentle voice. "Leave that letter to my father on the table, and don't touch it," he added, turning red.

"Yes, sir," said Nikita, melting under the influence of the wine which he had drunk, as he had said, "at his own expense," and winking his eyes with a visible desire to weep.

But when the captain said, "Good-by, Nikita," on the porch, Nikita suddenly broke down into repressed sobs, and ran to kiss his master's hand. .... "Farewell, master!" he exclaimed, sobbing. The old sailor's wife, who was standing on the porch, could not, in her capacity of a woman, refrain from joining in this touching scene, so she began to wipe her eyes with her dirty sleeve, and to say something about even gentlemen having their trials to bear, and that she, poor creature, had been left a widow. And she related for the hun-

dredth time to drunken Nikita the story of her woes; how her husband had been killed in the first bombardment, and how her little house had been utterly ruined (the one in which she was now living did not belong to her), and so on. When his master had departed, Nikita lighted his pipe, requested the daughter of their landlord to go for some vodka, and very soon ceased to weep, but, on the contrary, got into a quarrel with the old woman about some small bucket, which, he declared, she had broken.

"But perhaps I shall only be wounded," meditated the captain, as he marched through the twilight to the bastion with his company. "But where? How? Here or here?" he thought, indicating his belly and his breast..... "If it should be here" (he thought of the upper portion of his leg), "it might run round. Well, but if it were here, and by a splinter, that would finish me."

The staff-captain reached the lodgments safely through the trenches, set his men to work, with the assistance of an officer of sappers, in the darkness, which was already complete, and seated himself in a pit behind the breastworks. There was not much firing; only once in a while the lightning flashed from our batteries, then from *his*, and the brilliant fuse of a bomb traced an arc of flame against the dark, starry heavens. But all the bombs fell far in the rear and to the right of the rifle-pits in which the captain sat. He drank his vodka, ate his cheese, lit his cigarette, and, after saying his prayers, he tried to get a little sleep.

CHAPTER V

Prince Galtzin, Lieutenant-Colonel Neferdoff, and Praskukhin, whom no one had invited, to whom no one spoke, but who never left them, all went to drink tea with Adjutant Kalugin.

"Well, you did not finish telling me about Vaska Mendel," said Kalugin, as he took off his cloak, seated

himself by the window in a soft lounging-chair, and unbuttoned the collar of his fresh, stiffly starched cambric shirt: "How did he come to marry?"

"That's a joke, my dear fellow! *There was a time, I assure you, when nothing else was talked of in Petersburg*,[1] said Prince Galtzin, with a laugh, as he sprang up from the piano at which he was sitting, and seated himself at the window beside Kalugin's window. "It is simply ludicrous, and I know all the details of the affair."

And he began to relate — in a merry and skilful manner — a love-story, which we will omit, because it possesses no interest for us. But it is worthy of note that not only Prince Galtzin, but all the gentlemen who had placed themselves here, one at the window, another with his legs coiled up under him, a third at the piano, seemed totally different persons from what they had been when on the boulevard; there was nothing of that absurd arrogance and haughtiness which they had exhibited in public to the infantry officers; here they were among their own set, and natural, especially Kalugin and Prince Galtzin, and were very good, amiable, and merry fellows. The conversation turned on their comrades in the service in Petersburg, and on their acquaintances.

"What of Maslovsky?"

"Which? the uhlan of the body-guard or of the horse-guard?"

"I know both of them. The one in the horse-guards was with me when he was a little boy and had only just left school. What is the elder one? a captain of cavalry?"

"Oh, yes! long ago."

"And is he still going about with his gipsy maid?"

"No, he has deserted her...." and so forth, and so forth, in the same strain.

Then Prince Galtzin seated himself at the piano, and sang a gipsy song in magnificent style. Praskukhin began to sing second, although no one had asked him,

[1] In French in the original. — Tr.

and he did it so well that they requested him to accompany the prince again, which he gladly consented to do.

The servant came in with the tea, cream, and cracknels on a silver salver.

"Serve the prince," said Kalugin.

"Really, it is strange to think," said Galtzin, taking a glass, and walking to the window, "that we are in a beleaguered city; *pianofortes*, tea with cream, and such quarters as I should be only too happy to get in Petersburg."

"Yes, if it were not for that," said the old lieutenant-colonel, who was dissatisfied with everything, "this constant waiting for something would be simply unendurable .... and to see how men are killed, killed every day, ... and there is no end to it, and under such circumstances it would not be comfortable to live in the mud."

"And how about our infantry officers," said Kalugin; "who live in the bastions with the soldiers in the casemates, and eat beet soup with the soldiers .... how about them?"

"How about them? They don't change their linen for ten days at a time, and they are heroes — wonderful men."

At this moment an officer of infantry entered the room.

"I .... I was ordered .... may I present myself to the gen .... to his excellency from General N.?" he inquired, bowing with an air of embarrassment.

Kalugin rose, but, without returning the officer's salute, he asked him, with insulting courtesy and strained official smile, whether *they*[1] would not wait awhile; and, without inviting him to be seated or paying any further attention to him, he turned to Prince Galtzin and began to speak to him in French, so that the unhappy officer, who remained standing in the middle of the room, absolutely did not know what to do with himself.

[1] A polite way of referring to the general in the plural.

"It is on very important business, sir," said the officer, after a momentary pause.

"Ah! very well, then," said Kalugin, putting on his cloak, and accompanying him to the door.

"Well, gentlemen, I think there will be hot work to-night," said Kalugin, in French, on his return from the general's.

"Hey? What? A sortie?" They all began to question him.

"I don't know yet .... you will see for yourselves," replied Kalugin, with a mysterious smile.

"And my commander is on the bastion .... of course, I shall have to go," said Praskukhin, buckling on his sword.

But no one answered him; he must know for himself whether he had to go or not.

Praskukhin and Neferdoff went off, in order to betake themselves to their posts. "Farewell, gentlemen!" "Au revoir, gentlemen! We shall meet again to-night!" shouted Kalugin from the window when Praskukhin and Neferdoff trotted down the road, bending over the bows of their Cossack saddles. The trampling of their Cossack horses soon died away in the dusky street.

"No, tell me, is something really going to take place to-night?" said Galtzin, in French, as he leaned with Kalugin on the window-sill, and gazed at the bombs which were flying over the bastions.

"I can tell you; you see .... you have been on the bastions, of course?" (Galtzin made a sign of assent, although he had been only once to the fourth bastion.) "Well, there was a trench opposite our lunette;" and Kalugin, who was not a specialist, although he considered his judgment on military affairs particularly accurate, began to explain the position of our troops and of the enemy's works, and the plan of the proposed affair, mixing up the technical terms of fortifications a good deal in the process.

"But they are beginning to hammer away at our lodgments. Oho! was that ours or *his?* there, it has burst," they said, as they leaned out of the window, gaz-

ing at the fiery lines of the bombs intersecting in the air, at the lightnings of the discharges, at the dark blue sky, momentarily illuminated, and at the white smoke of the powder, and listened to the sounds of the firing, which grew louder and louder.

"What a charming sight? is it not?" said Kalugin, in French, directing the attention of his guest to the really beautiful spectacle. "Do you know, you cannot distinguish the stars from the bombs at times."

"Yes, I was just thinking that that was a star; but it darted down .... there, it has burst now. And that big star yonder, what is it called? It is just exactly like a bomb."

"Do you know, I have grown so used to these bombs that I am convinced that a starlight night in Russia will always seem to me to be all bombs; one gets so accustomed to them."

"But ought not I to go on this sortie?" inquired Galtzin, after a momentary silence.

"Enough of that, brother! Don't think of such a thing! I won't let you go!" replied Kalugin. "Your turn will come, brother!"

"Seriously? So you think that it is not necessary to go? Hey?" ....

At that moment, a frightful crash of rifles was heard above the roar of the cannon in the direction in which these gentlemen were looking, and thousands of small fires, flaring up incessantly, without intermission, flashed along the entire line.

"That's it, when the real work has begun!" said Kalugin. .... "That is the sound of the rifles, and I cannot listen to it with indifference; it takes a sort of hold on your soul, you know. And there is the hurrah!" he added, listening to the prolonged and distant roar of hundreds of voices, "A-a-aa!" which reached him from the bastion.

"What is this hurrah, theirs or ours?"

"I don't know; but it has come to a hand-to-hand fight, for the firing has ceased."

At that moment, an officer followed by his Cossack

galloped up to the porch, and slipped down from his horse.

"Where from?"

"From the bastion. The general is wanted."

"Let us go. Well, now, what is it?"

"They have attacked the lodgments.... have taken them.... the French have brought up vast reserves.... they have attacked our forces.... there were only two battalions," said the panting officer, who was the same that had come in the evening, drawing his breath with difficulty, but stepping to the door with perfect unconcern.

"Well, have they retreated?" inquired Galtzin.

"No," answered the officer, angrily. "The battalion came up and beat them back; but the commander of the regiment is killed, and many officers, and I have been ordered to ask for reinforcements."....

And with these words he and Kalugin went off to the general, whither we will not follow them.

Five minutes later, Kalugin was mounted on the Cossack's horse (and with that peculiar, *quasi*-Cossack seat, in which, as I have observed, all adjutants find something especially captivating, for some reason or other), and rode at a trot to the bastion, in order to give some orders, and to await the news of the final result of the affair. And Prince Galtzin, under the influence of that oppressive emotion which the signs of a battle near at hand usually produce on a spectator who takes no part in it, went out into the street, and began to pace up and down there without any object.

CHAPTER VI

The soldiers were bearing the wounded on stretchers, and supporting them by their arms. It was completely dark in the streets; now and then a rare light flashed in the hospital or from the spot where the officers were seated. The same thunder of cannon and exchange of

rifle-shots was borne from the bastions, and the same fires flashed against the black sky. Now and then, you could hear the trampling hoofs of an orderly's horse, the groan of a wounded man, the footsteps and voices of the stretcher-bearers, or the conversation of some of the frightened female inhabitants, who had come out on their porches to view the cannonade.

Among the latter were our acquaintances, Nikita, the old sailor's widow, with whom he had already made his peace, and her ten-year-old daughter. "O Lord! O Most Holy Mother of God!" whispered the old woman to herself with a sigh, as she watched the bombs, which, like balls of fire, sailed incessantly from one side to the other. "How dreadful, how dreadful! I-i-hi-hi! It was not so in the first bombardment. See, there it has burst, the cursed thing! right above our house in the suburbs."

"No, it is farther off, in aunt Arinka's garden, that they all fall," said the little girl.

"And where, where is my master now!" said Nikita, with a drawl, for he was still rather drunk. "Oh, how I love that master of mine.... I don't know myself!.... I love him so that if, which God forbid, they should kill him in this sinful fight, then, if you will believe it, aunty, I don't know what I might do to myself in that case.... by Heavens, I don't! He is such a master that words will not do him justice! Would I exchange him for one of those who play cards? That is simply.... whew! that's all there is to say!" concluded Nikita, pointing at the lighted window of his master's room, in which, as the staff-captain was absent, Yunker Zhvadchevsky had invited his friends to a carouse, on the occasion of his receiving the cross: Sub-Lieutenant Ugrovitch and Sub-Lieutenant Nepshisetsky, who was ill with a cold in the head.

"Those little stars! They dart through the sky like stars, like stars!" said the little girl, breaking the silence which succeeded Nikita's words. "There, there! another has dropped! Why do they do it, mamma?"

"They will ruin our little cabin entirely," said the old

woman, sighing, and not replying to the little girl's question.

"And when uncle and I went there to-day, mamma," continued the little girl, in a shrill voice, "there was such a bi-ig cannon-ball lying in the room, near the cupboard; it had broken through the wall and into the room .... and it is so big that you could n't lift it."

"Those who had husbands and money have gone away," said the old woman, "and now they have ruined the last little house. See, see how they are firing, the wretches. O Lord! O Lord!"

"And as soon as we came out, a bomb flew at us, and burst and scattered the earth about, and a piece of the shell came near striking uncle and me."

CHAPTER VII

Prince Galtzin met more and more wounded men, in stretchers and on foot, supporting each other, and talking loudly.

"When they rushed up, comrades," said one tall soldier, who had two guns on his shoulder, in a bass voice, "when they rushed up and shouted, 'Allah, Allah!'[1] they pressed each other on. You kill one, and another takes his place .... you can do nothing. You never saw such numbers as there were of them." ....

But at this point in his story Galtzin interrupted him.

"You come from the bastion?"

"Just so, your honor!"

"Well, what has been going on there? Tell me."

"Why, what has been going on? They attacked in force, your honor; they climbed over the wall, and that 's the end of it. They conquered completely, your honor."

"How conquered? You repulsed them, surely?"

[1] The Russian soldiers, who had been fighting the Turks, were so accustomed to this cry of the enemy that they always declared that the French also cried "Allah." — Author's Note.

"How could we repulse them, when *his* whole force came up. They killed all our men, and there was no help given us."

The soldier was mistaken, for the trenches were behind our forces; but this is a peculiar thing, which any one may observe: a soldier who has been wounded in an engagement always thinks that the day has been lost, and that the encounter has been a frightfully bloody one.

"Then, what did they mean by telling me that you had repulsed them?" said Galtzin, with irritation. "Perhaps the enemy was repulsed after you left. Is it long since you came away?"

"I have this instant come from there, your honor," replied the soldier. "It is hardly possible. The trenches remained in his hands.... he won a complete victory."

"Well, and are you not ashamed to have surrendered the trenches? This is horrible!" said Galtzin, angered by such indifference.

"What, when he was there in *force?*" growled the soldier.

"And, your honor," said a soldier on a stretcher, who had just come up with them, "how could we help surrendering, when nearly all of us had been killed? If we had been in force, we would only have surrendered with our lives. But what was there to do? I ran one man through, and then I was struck. .... O-oh! softly, brothers! steady, brothers! go more steadily! .... O-oh!" groaned the wounded man.

"There really seem to be a great many extra men coming this way," said Galtzin, again stopping the tall soldier with the two rifles. "Why are you walking off? Hey there, halt!"

The soldier halted, and removed his cap with his left hand.

"Where are you going, and why?" he shouted at him, sternly. "He...."

But, approaching the soldier very closely at that moment, he perceived that the latter's right arm was covered with blood from the coat-cuff to far above the elbow.

"I am wounded, your honor!"

"Wounded? how?"

"It must have been a bullet, here!" said the soldier, pointing at his arm; "and here also.... I cannot tell what broke my head," and, bending over, he showed the hair upon the back of it all clotted together with blood.

"And whose gun is that second one you have?"

"A choice French one, your honor! I captured it. And I should not have come away if it had not been to accompany this soldier; he might fall down," he added, pointing at the soldier, who was walking a little in front, leaning upon his gun, and with difficulty dragging and moving his left foot.

Prince Galtzin all at once became frightfully ashamed of his unjust suspicions. He felt that he was growing crimson, and turned away, without questioning the wounded men further, and, without looking after them, he went to the place where the injured men were being cared for.

Having forced his way with difficulty to the porch, through the wounded men who had come on foot, and the stretcher-bearers, who were entering with the wounded and emerging with the dead, Galtzin entered the first room, glanced round, and involuntarily turned back, and immediately ran into the street. It was too terrible.

CHAPTER VIII

The vast, dark, lofty hall, lighted only by the four or five candles which the doctors were carrying about to inspect the wounded, was literally full. The stretcher-bearers incessantly brought in the wounded, ranged them one beside another on the floor, which was already so crowded that the unfortunate wretches jostled each other and sprinkled each other with their blood, and then went forth for more. The pools of blood which were visible on the unoccupied places, the hot breaths

of several hundred men, and the steam which rose from those who were toiling with the stretchers produced a peculiar, thick, heavy, offensive atmosphere, in which the candles burned dimly in the different parts of the room. The dull murmur of diverse groans, sighs, death-rattles, broken now and again by a shriek, was borne throughout the apartment. Sisters of charity, with tranquil faces, and with an expression not of empty, feminine, tearfully sickly compassion, but of active, practical sympathy, flitted hither and thither among the blood-stained overcoats and shirts, stepping over the wounded, with medicine, water, bandages, lint.

Doctors, with their sleeves rolled up, knelt beside the wounded, beside whom the assistant surgeons held the candles, inspecting, feeling, and probing the wounds, in spite of the terrible groans and entreaties of the sufferers. One of the doctors was seated at a small table by the door, and, at the moment when Galtzin entered the room, he was just writing down "No. 532."

"Ivan Bogaeff, common soldier, third company of the S—— regiment, *fractura femoris complicata!*" called another from the extremity of the hall, as he felt of the crushed leg. .... "Turn him over."

"O-oi, my fathers, good fathers!" shrieked the soldier, beseeching them not to touch him.

"*Perforatio capitis.*"

"Semyon Neferdoff, lieutenant-colonel of the N—— regiment of infantry. Have a little patience, colonel; otherwise it is impossible; I will let you alone!" said a third, picking away at the head of the unfortunate colonel, with some sort of a hook.

"Ai! stop! Oi! for God's sake, quick, quick, for the sake a-a-a-a!" ....

"*Perforatio pectoris* .... Sevastyan Sereda, common soldier .... of what regiment? however, you need not write that: *moritur.* Carry him away," said the doctor, abandoning the soldier, who was rolling his eyes, and already emitting the death-rattle.

Forty stretcher-bearers stood at the door, awaiting the task of transporting to the hospital the men who

had been attended to, and the dead to the chapel, and gazed at this picture in silence, only uttering a heavy sigh from time to time. ....

CHAPTER IX

On his way to the bastion, Kalugin met numerous wounded men; but, knowing from experience that such a spectacle has a bad effect on the spirits of a man on the verge of an action, he not only did not pause to interrogate them, but, on the contrary, he tried not to pay any heed to them. At the foot of the hill he encountered an orderly, who was galloping from the bastion at full speed.

"Zobkin! Zobkin! Stop a minute!"

"Well, what is it?"

"Where are you from?"

"From the lodgments."

"Well, how are things there? Hot?"

"Ah, frightfully!"

And the orderly galloped on.

In fact, although there was not much firing from the rifles, the cannonade had begun with fresh vigor and greater heat than ever.

"Ah, that's bad!" thought Kalugin, experiencing a rather unpleasant sensation, and there came to him also a presentiment, that is to say, a very usual thought — the thought of death.

But Kalugin was an egotist and gifted with nerves of steel; in a word, he was what is called brave. He did not yield to his first sensation, and began to arouse his courage; he recalled to mind a certain adjutant of Napoleon, who, after having given the command to advance, galloped up to Napoleon, his head all covered with blood.

"You are wounded?" said Napoleon to him. "I beg your pardon, Sire, I am dead," — and the adjutant fell from his horse, and died on the spot.

This seemed very fine to him, and he fancied that he somewhat resembled this adjutant; then he gave his horse a blow with the whip, and assumed still more of that dashing *Cossack seat*, glanced at his orderly, who was galloping behind him, standing upright in his stirrups, and thus in dashing style he reached the place where it was necessary to dismount. Here he found four soldiers, who were smoking their pipes as they sat on the stones.

"What are you doing here?" he shouted at them.

"We have been carrying a wounded man from the field, your honor, and have sat down to rest," one of them replied, concealing his pipe behind his back, and pulling off his cap.

"Resting indeed! March off to your posts!"

And, in company with them, he walked up the hill through the trenches, encountering wounded men at every step.

On attaining the crest of the hill, he turned to the left, and, after taking a few steps, found himself quite alone. Splinters whizzed near him, and struck in the trenches. Another bomb rose in front of him, and seemed to be flying straight at him. All of a sudden he felt terrified; he ran off five paces at full speed, and lay down on the ground. But when the bomb burst, and at a distance from him, he grew dreadfully vexed at himself, and glanced about as he rose, to see whether any one had perceived him fall, but there was no one about.

When fear has once made its way into the mind, it does not speedily give way to another feeling. He, who had boasted that he never bent, hastened along the trench with accelerated speed, and almost on his hands and knees. "Ah! this is very bad!" he thought, as he stumbled. "I shall certainly be killed!" And, conscious of how difficult it was for him to breathe, and that the perspiration was breaking out all over his body, he was amazed at himself, but he no longer strove to conquer his feelings.

All at once steps became audible in advance of him.

He quickly straightened himself up, raised his head, and, boldly clanking his sword, began to proceed at a slower pace than before. He did not know himself. When he joined the officer of sappers and the sailor who were coming to meet him, and the former called to him, "Lie down," pointing to the bright speck of a bomb, which, growing ever brighter and brighter, swifter and swifter, as it approached, crashed down in the vicinity of the trench, he only bent his head a very little, involuntarily, under the influence of the terrified shout, and went his way.

"Whew! what a brave man!" ejaculated the sailor, who had calmly watched the exploding bomb, and, with practised glance, at once calculated that its splinters could not strike inside the trench; "he will not even lie down."

Only a few steps remained to be taken, across an open space, before Kalugin would reach the casemate of the commander of the bastion, when he was again attacked by dimness of vision and that stupid sensation of fear; his heart began to beat more violently, the blood rushed to his head, and he was obliged to exert an effort over himself in order to reach the casemate.

"Why are you so out of breath?" inquired the general, when Kalugin had communicated to him his orders.

"I have been walking very fast, your excellency!"

"Will you not take a glass of wine?"

Kalugin drank the wine, and lighted a cigarette. The engagement had already come to an end; only the heavy cannonade continued on both sides.

In the casemate sat General N., the commander of the bastion, and six other officers, among whom was Praskukhin, discussing various details of the conflict. As he sat in this comfortable apartment, with blue hangings, with a sofa, a bed, a table, covered with papers, a wall clock, and the holy picture, before which burned a lamp, and gazed upon these signs of habitation, and at the arshin-thick (twenty-eight inches) beams which formed the ceiling, and listened to the shots, which were dead-

ened by the casemate, Kalugin positively could not understand how he had twice permitted himself to be overcome with such unpardonable weakness. He was angry with himself, and he longed for danger, in order that he might subject himself to another trial.

"I am glad that you are here, captain," he said to a naval officer, in the cloak of staff-officer, with a large mustache and the Cross of St. George, who entered the casemate at that moment, and asked the general to give him some men that he might repair the two embrasures on his battery, which had been demolished. "The general ordered me to inquire," continued Kalugin, when the commander of the battery ceased to address the general, "whether your guns can fire grape-shot into the trenches."

"Only one of my guns will do that," replied the captain, gruffly.

"Let us go and see, all the same."

The captain frowned, and grunted angrily: —

"I have already passed the whole night there, and I came here to try and get a little rest," said he. "Cannot you go alone? My assistant, Lieutenant Kartz, is there, and he will show you everything."

The captain had now been for six months in command of this, one of the most dangerous of the batteries — and even when there were no casemates he had lived without relief, in the bastion and among the sailors, from the beginning of the siege, and he bore a reputation among them for bravery. Therefore his refusal particularly struck and amazed Kalugin. "That 's what reputation is worth!" he thought.

"Well, then, I will go alone, if you will permit me," he said in a somewhat bantering tone to the captain, who, however, paid not the slightest heed to his words.

But Kalugin did not reflect that he had passed, in all, at different times, perhaps fifty hours on the bastion, while the captain had lived there for six months. Kalugin was actuated, moreover, by vanity, by a desire to shine, by the hope of reward, of reputation, and by the charm of risk; but the captain had already gone through

all that: he had been vain at first, he had displayed valor, he had risked his life, he had hoped for fame and guerdon, and had even obtained them, but these actuating motives had already lost their power over him, and he regarded the matter in another light; he fulfilled his duty with punctuality, but understanding quite well how small were the chances for his life which were left him, after a six months' residence in the bastion, he no longer risked these chances, except in case of stern necessity, so that the young lieutenant, who had entered the battery only a week previous, and who was now showing it to Kalugin, in company with whom he took turns in leaning out of the embrasure, or climbing out on the ramparts, seemed ten times as brave as the captain.

After inspecting the battery, Kalugin returned to the casemate, and ran against the general in the dark, as the latter was ascending to the watch-tower with his staff-officers.

"Captain Praskukhin!" said the general, "please to go to the first lodgment and say to the second battery of the M—— regiment, which is at work there, that they are to abandon their work, to evacuate the place without making any noise, and to join their regiment, which is standing at the foot of the hill in reserve. .... Do you understand? Lead them to their regiment yourself."

"Yes, sir."

And Praskukhin set out for the lodgment on a run.

The firing was growing more infrequent.

CHAPTER X

"Is this the second battalion of the M—— regiment?" asked Praskukhin, hastening up to the spot, and running against the soldiers who were carrying earth in sacks.

"Exactly so, sir."

"Where is the commander?"

Mikharloff, supposing that the inquiry was for the com-

mander of the corps, crawled out of his pit, and, taking Praskukhin for the colonel, he stepped up to him with his hand at his vizor.

"The general has given orders .... that you .... are to be so good as to go .... as quickly as possible .... and, in particular, as quietly as possible, to the rear, ... not to the rear, but to the reserve," said Praskukhin, glancing askance at the enemy's fires.

On recognizing Praskukhin and discovering the state of things, Mikhaïloff dropped his hand, gave his orders, and the battalion started into motion, gathered up their guns, put on their overcoats, and set out.

No one who has not experienced it can imagine the delight which a man feels when he takes his departure, after a three hours' bombardment, from such a dangerous post as the lodgments. Several times in the course of those three hours, Mikhaïloff, who had, not without reason, considered his *end* as inevitable, had grown accustomed to the conviction that he should infallibly be killed, and that he no longer belonged to this world. In spite of this, however, he had great difficulty in keeping his feet from running away with him when he issued from the lodgments at the head of his corps, in company with Praskukhin.

"*Au revoir*," said the major, the commander of another battalion, who was to remain in the lodgments, and with whom he had shared his cheese, as they sat in the pit behind the breastworks — "a pleasant journey to you."

"Thanks, I hope you will get off luckily. The firing seems to be holding up."

But no sooner had he said this than the enemy, who must have observed the movement in the lodgments, began to fire faster and faster. Our guns began to reply to him, and again a heavy cannonade began. The stars were gleaming high, but not brilliantly, in the sky. The night was dark — you could hardly see your hand before you; only the flashes of the discharges and the explosions of the bombs illuminated objects for a moment. The soldiers marched on rapidly, in silence, in-

voluntarily treading close on each other's heels; all that was audible through the incessant firing was the measured sound of their footsteps on the dry road, the noise of their bayonets as they came in contact, or the sigh and prayer of some young soldier, "Lord, Lord! what is this?" Now and then the groan of a wounded man arose, and the shout, "Stretcher!" (In the company commanded by Mikhaïloff, twenty-six men were killed in one night, by the fire of the artillery alone.) The lightning flashed against the distant horizon, the sentry in the bastion shouted, "Can-non!" and the ball, shrieking over the heads of the corps, tore up the earth, and sent the stones flying.

"Deuce take it! how slowly they march," thought Praskukhin, glancing back continually, as he walked beside Mikhaïloff. "Really, it will be better for me to run on in front; I have already given the order..... But no, it might be said later on that I was a coward. What will be will be; I will march alongside them."

"Now, why is he walking behind me?" thought Mikhaïloff, on his side. "So far as I have observed, he always brings ill-luck. There it comes, flying straight for us, apparently."

After traversing several hundred paces, they encountered Kalugin, who was going to the casemates, clanking his sword boldly as he walked, in order to learn, by the general's command, how the works were progressing there. But on meeting Mikhaïloff, it occurred to him that, instead of going thither, under that terrible fire, which he was not ordered to do, he could make minute inquiries of the officer who had been there. And, in fact, Mikhaïloff furnished him with a detailed account of the works. After walking a short distance with them, Kalugin turned into the trench which led to the casemate.

"Well, what news is there?" inquired the officer, who was seated alone in the room, and eating his supper.

"Well, nothing, apparently, except that there will not be any further conflict."

"How so? On the contrary, the general has but just

gone up to the watch-tower. A regiment has already arrived. Yes, there it is ..... do you hear? The firing has begun again. Don't go. Why should you?" added the officer, perceiving the movement made by Kalugin.

"But I must be there without fail, in the present instance," thought Kalugin, "but I have already subjected myself to a good deal of danger to-day; the firing is terrible."

"Well, after all, I had better wait for him here," he said.

In fact, the general returned, twenty minutes later, accompanied by the officers who had been with him; among their number was the yunker, Baron Pesth, but Praskukhin was not with them. The lodgments had been captured and occupied by our forces.

After receiving a full account of the engagement, Kalugin and Pesth went out of the casemates.

CHAPTER XI

"THERE is blood on your cloak; have you been having a hand-to-hand fight?" Kalugin asked him.

"Oh, 't is frightful! Just imagine ....."

And Pesth began to relate how he had led his company, how the commander of the company had been killed, how he had spitted a Frenchman, and how, if it had not been for him, the battle would have been lost.

The foundations for this tale, that the company commander had been killed, and that Pesth had killed a Frenchman, were correct; but, in giving the details, the yunker invented facts and bragged.

He bragged involuntarily, because, during the whole engagement, he had been in a kind of mist, and had forgotten himself to such a degree that everything which happened seemed to him to have happened somewhere, sometime, and with some one, and very naturally he had endeavored to bring out these details in a light which should be favorable to himself. But what had happened in reality was this:—

The battalion to which the yunker had been ordered for the sortie had stood under fire for two hours, near a wall; then the commander of the battalion in front said something, the company commanders made a move, the battalion got under way, issued forth from behind the breastworks, marched forward a hundred paces, and came to a halt in columns. Pesth had been ordered to take his stand on the right flank of the second company.

The yunker stood his ground, absolutely without knowing where he was, or why he was there, and, with restrained breath, and with a cold chill running down his spine, he had stared stupidly straight ahead into the dark beyond, in the expectation of something terrible. But, since there was no firing in progress, he did not feel so much terrified as he did queer and strange at finding himself outside the fortress, in the open plain. Again the battalion commander ahead said something. Again the officers conversed in whispers, as they communicated the orders, and the black wall of the first company suddenly disappeared. They had been ordered to lie down. The second company lay down also, and Pesth, in the act, pricked his hand on something sharp. The only man who did not lie down was the commander of the second company. His short form, with the naked sword which he was flourishing, talking incessantly the while, moved about in front of the troop.

"Boys! my brave lads!.... look at me! Don't fire at them, but at them with your bayonets, the dogs! When I shout, 'Hurrah!' follow me close .... the chief thing is to be as close together as possible .... let us show what we are made of! Do not let us cover ourselves with shame—shall we, hey, my boys? For our father the Tzar!"

"What is our company commander's surname?" Pesth inquired of a yunker, who was lying beside him. "What a brave fellow he is!"

"Yes, he 's always that way in a fight. ...." answered the yunker. "His name is Lisinkovsky."

At that moment, a flame flashed up in front of the company. There was a crash, which deafened them all, stones and splinters flew high in the air (fifty seconds, at least, later a stone fell from above and tore off the leg of a soldier). This was a bomb from an elevated platform, and the fact that it fell in the midst of the company proved that the French had caught sight of the column.

"So they are sending bombs!.... Just let us get at you, and you shall feel a three-cornered Russian bayonet, curse you!" shouted the commander of the company, in so loud a tone that the battalion commander was forced to order him to be quiet and not to make so much noise.

After this the first company rose to their feet, and after it the second. They were ordered to lower arms, and the battalion advanced. Pesth was so terrified that he absolutely could not recollect whether they advanced far, or whither, or who did what. He walked like a drunken man. But all at once millions of fires flashed from all sides, there was a whistling and a crashing. He shrieked and ran somewhere or other, because they were all shrieking and running. Then he stumbled and fell upon something. It was the company commander (who had been wounded at the head of his men and who, taking the yunker for a Frenchman, seized him by the leg). Then, when he had freed his leg, and risen to his feet, some man ran against his back in the dark and almost knocked him down again; another man shouted, "Run him through! what are you staring at?"

Then he seized a gun, and ran the bayonet into something soft. "Ah, Dieu!" exclaimed some one in a terribly piercing voice, and then only did Pesth discover that he had transfixed a Frenchman. The cold sweat started out all over his body. He shook as though in a fever, and flung away the gun. But this lasted only a moment; it immediately occurred to him that he was a hero. He seized the gun again, and, shouting "Hurrah!" with the crowd, he rushed away from the dead Frenchman. After having traversed about twenty

paces, he came to the trench. There he found our men and the company commander.

"I have run one man through!" he said to the commander.

"You're a brave fellow, Baron."

CHAPTER XII

"But, do you know, Praskukhin has been killed," said Pesth, accompanying Kalugin, on the way back.

"It cannot be!"

"But it can. I saw him myself."

"Farewell; I am in a hurry."

"I am well content," thought Kalugin, as he returned home; "I have had luck for the first time when on duty. That was a capital engagement, and I am alive and whole. There will be some fine presentations for promotion, and I shall certainly get a golden sword. And I deserve it, too."

After reporting to the general all that was necessary, he went to his room, in which sat Prince Galtzin, who had returned long before, and who was reading a book, which he had found on Kalugin's table, while waiting for him.

It was with a wonderful sense of enjoyment that Kalugin found himself at home again, out of all danger; and, having donned his night-shirt and lain down on his bed, he began to relate to Galtzin the particulars of the affair, communicating them, naturally, from a point of view which made it appear that he, Kalugin, was a very active and valiant officer, to which, in my opinion, it was superfluous to refer, seeing that every one knew it and that no one had any right to doubt it, with the exception, perhaps, of the deceased Captain Praskukhin, who, in spite of the fact that he had been accustomed to consider it a piece of happiness to walk arm in arm with Kalugin, had told a friend, only the evening before, in private, that Kalugin was a very fine man, but that,

between you and me, he was terribly averse to going to the bastions.

No sooner had Praskukhin, who had been walking beside Mikhaïloff, taken leave of Kalugin, and, betaking himself to a safer place, had begun to recover his spirits somewhat, than he caught sight of a flash of lightning behind him flaring up vividly, heard the shout of the sentinel, "Mortar!" and the words of the soldiers who were marching behind, "It's flying straight at the bastion!"

Mikhaïloff glanced round. The brilliant point of the bomb seemed to be suspended directly over his head in such a position that it was absolutely impossible to determine its course. But this lasted only for a second. The bomb came faster and faster, nearer and nearer, the sparks of the fuse were already visible, and the fateful whistle was audible, and it descended straight in the middle of the battalion.

"Lie down!" shouted a voice.

Mikhaïloff and Praskukhin threw themselves on the ground. Praskukhin shut his eyes, and only heard the bomb crash against the hard earth somewhere in the vicinity. A second passed, which seemed an hour — and the bomb had not burst. Praskukhin was alarmed; had he felt cowardly for nothing? Perhaps the bomb had fallen at a distance, and it merely seemed to him that the fuse was hissing near him. He opened his eyes, and saw with satisfaction that Mikhaïloff was lying motionless on the earth, at his very feet. But then his eyes encountered for a moment the glowing fuse of the bomb, which was twisting about at a distance of an arshin[1] from him.

A cold horror, which excluded every other thought and feeling, took possession of his whole being. He covered his face with his hands.

Another second passed — a second in which a whole world of thoughts, feelings, hopes, and memories flashed through his mind.

"Which will be killed, Mikhaïloff or I? Or both

[1] Twenty-eight inches.

together? And if it is I, where will it strike? If in the head, then all is over with me; but if in the leg, they will cut it off, and I shall ask them to be sure to give me chloroform, — and I may still remain among the living. But perhaps no one but Mikhaïloff will be killed; then I will relate how we were walking along together, and how he was killed and his blood spurted over me. No, it is nearer to me .... it will kill me!"

Then he remembered the twenty rubles which he owed Mikhaïloff, and recalled another debt in Petersburg, which ought to have been paid long ago; the gipsy air which he had sung the previous evening recurred to him. The woman whom he loved appeared to his imagination in a cap with lilac ribbons, a man who had insulted him five years before, and whom he had not paid off for his insult, came to his mind, though inextricably interwoven with these and with a thousand other memories the feeling of the moment — the fear of death — never deserted him for an instant.

"But perhaps it will not burst," he thought, and, with the decision of despair, he tried to open his eyes. But at that instant, through his still closed eyelids, his eyes were smitten with a red fire, and something struck him in the center of the breast, with a frightful crash; he ran off, he knew not whither, stumbled over his sword, which had got between his legs, and fell over on his side.

"Thank God! I am only bruised," was his first thought, and he tried to touch his breast with his hands; but his arms seemed fettered, and pincers were pressing his head. The soldiers flitted before his eyes, and he unconsciously counted them: "One, two, three soldiers; and there is an officer, wrapped up in his cloak," he thought. Then a flash passed before his eyes, and he thought that something had been fired off; was it the mortars, or the cannon? It must have been the cannon. And there was still another shot; and there were more soldiers; five, six, seven soldiers were passing by him. Then suddenly he felt afraid that they would crush him.

He wanted to shout to them that he was bruised; but his mouth was so dry that his tongue clove to his palate and he was tortured by a frightful thirst.

He felt that he was wet about the breast; this sensation of dampness reminded him of water, and he even wanted to drink this, whatever it was. "I must have brought the blood when I fell," he thought, and, beginning to give way more and more to terror, lest the soldiers who passed should crush him, he collected all his strength, and tried to cry: "Take me with you!" but, instead of this, he groaned so terribly that it frightened him to hear himself. Then more red fires flashed in his eyes — and it seemed to him as though the soldiers were laying stones upon him; the fires danced more and more rarely, the stones which they piled on him oppressed him more and more.

He exerted all his strength, in order to cast off the stones; he stretched himself out, and no longer saw or heard or thought or felt anything. He had been killed on the spot by a splinter of shell, in the middle of the breast.

CHAPTER XIII

Mikhaïloff, on catching sight of the bomb, fell to the earth, and, like Praskukhin, he went over in thought and feeling an incredible amount during those two seconds while the bomb lay there unexploded. He prayed to God mentally, and kept repeating: "Thy will be done!"

"And why did I enter the military service?" he thought at the same time; "and why, again, did I exchange into the infantry, in order to take part in this campaign? Would it not have been better for me to remain in the regiment of Uhlans, in the town of T——, and pass the time with my friend Natasha? And now this is what has come of it."

And he began to count, "One, two, three, four," guessing that if it burst on the even number, he would live, but if on the uneven number, then he would be

killed. "All is over; killed," he thought, when the bomb burst (he did not remember whether it was on the even or the uneven number), and he felt a blow and a sharp pain in his head. "Lord, forgive my sins," he murmured, folding his hands, then rose, and fell back senseless.

His first sensation, when he came to himself, was the blood which was flowing from his nose, and the pain in his head, which had become much less powerful. "It is my soul departing," he thought. "What will it be like *there?* Lord, receive my soul in peace! But one thing is strange," he thought, ... "and that is that, though dying, I can still hear so plainly the footsteps of the soldiers and the report of the shots."

"Fetch the stretcher .... hey there .... the captain is killed!" shouted a voice over his head, which he recognized as the voice of his drummer, Ignatieff.

Some one grasped him by the shoulders. He made an effort to open his eyes, and saw overhead the dark blue heavens, clusters of stars, and two bombs, which were flying over him, one after the other; he saw Ignatieff, the soldiers with the stretcher, the ramparts, the trenches, and all at once he became convinced that he was not yet in the other world.

He had been slightly wounded in the head with a stone. His very first impression was one resembling regret; he had so beautifully and so calmly prepared himself for transit *yonder* that a return to reality, with its bombs, its trenches, and its blood, produced a disagreeable effect on him; his second impression was an involuntary joy that he was alive, and the third a desire to leave the bastion as speedily as possible. The drummer bound up his commander's head with his handkerchief, and, taking him under the arm, he led him to the place where the bandaging was going on.

"But where am I going, and why?" thought the staff-captain, when he recovered his senses a little. "It is my duty to remain with my men and not to go on ahead, ... the more so as they will soon be out of range of the shots," some voice whispered to him.

"Never mind, my boy," he said, pulling his arm away from the obliging drummer. "I will not go to the field-hospital; I will remain with my men."

And he turned back.

"You had better have your wound properly attended to, your honor," said Ignatieff. "In the heat of the moment, it seems as if it were a trifle; but it will be the worse if not attended to. There is some inflammation rising there.... really, now, your honor."

Mikhaïloff paused for a moment in indecision, and would have followed Ignatieff's advice, in all probability, had he not called to mind how many severely wounded men there must needs be at the field-hospital. "Perhaps the doctor will smile at my scratch," thought the staff-captain, and he returned with decision to his men, wholly regardless of the drummer's admonitions.

"And where is orderly-officer Praskukhin, who was walking with me?" he asked the lieutenant, who was leading the corps when they met.

"I don't know.... killed, probably," replied the lieutenant, reluctantly.

"How is it that you do not know whether he was killed or wounded? He was walking with us. And why have you not carried him with you?"

"How could it be done, brother, when the place was so hot for us!"

"Ah, how could you do such a thing, Mikhaïl Ivanitch!" said Mikhaïloff, angrily. "How could you abandon him if he was alive; and if he was dead, you should still have brought away his body."

"How could he be alive when, as I tell you, I went up to him and saw!" returned the lieutenant. "As you like, however! Only, his own men might carry him off. Here, the dogs are beginning to fire cannon-balls now!" he added....

Mikhaïloff sat down, and clasped his head, which the motion caused to pain him terribly.

"Yes, they must go and get him, without fail; perhaps he is still alive," said Mikhaïloff. "It is your *duty*, Mikhaïl Ivanitch!"

Mikhaïl Ivanitch made no reply.

"He did not take him at the time, and now the soldiers must be sent alone .... and how can they be sent? their lives may be sacrificed in vain, under that hot fire," thought Mikhaïloff.

"Boys! we must go back .... and get the officer who was wounded there in the ditch," he said, in not too loud and commanding a tone, for he felt how unpleasant it would be to the soldiers to obey his order, — and, in fact, as he did not address any one in particular by name, no one set out to fulfil it.

"And really, it is quite possible that he is already dead, and it is *not worth while* to subject the men to unnecessary danger; I alone am to blame for not having seen to it. I will go myself and learn whether he is alive. It is my *duty*," said Mikhaïloff to himself.

"Mikhaïl Ivanitch! Lead the men forward, and I will overtake you," he said, and, pulling up his overcoat with one hand, and with the other constantly touching the image of Saint Mitrofaniy, in which he cherished a special faith, he set off on a run along the trench.

Having convinced himself that Praskukhin was dead, he dragged himself back, panting, and supporting with his hand the loosened bandage and his head, which began to pain him severely. The battalion had already reached the foot of the hill, and a place almost out of range of shots, when Mikhaïloff overtook it. I say *almost* out of range because some stray bombs struck here and there.

"At all events, I must go to the hospital to-morrow, and put down my name," thought the staff-captain, as the medical student assisting the doctors bound his wound.

CHAPTER XIV

Hundreds of bodies, freshly smeared with blood, of men who two hours previous had been filled with divers lofty or petty hopes and desires, now lay, with stiffened

limbs, in the dewy, flowery valley which separated the bastion from the trenches, and on the level floor of the chapel for the dead in Sevastopol; hundreds of men crawled, twisted, and groaned, with curses and prayers on their parched lips, some amid the corpses in the flower-strewn vale, others on stretchers, on cots, and on the blood-stained floor of the field-hospital.

And still, as on the days preceding, the dawn glowed, over Sapun Mountain, the twinkling stars paled, the white mist spread abroad from the dark, sounding sea, the red glow illuminated the east, long crimson cloudlets darted across the blue horizon; and still, as on days preceding, the powerful, all-beautiful sun rose up, giving promise of joy, love, and happiness to all who dwell in the world.

CHAPTER XV

On the following day, the band of the chasseurs was playing again on the boulevard, and again officers, cadets, soldiers, and young women were promenading in festive guise about the pavilion and through the low-hanging alleys of fragrant white acacias in bloom.

Kalugin, Prince Galtzin, and some colonel or other were walking arm-in-arm near the pavilion, and discussing the engagement of the day before. As always happens in such cases, the chief governing thread of the conversation was not the engagement itself, but the part which those who were narrating the story of the affair took in it.

Their faces and the sound of their voices had a serious, almost melancholy expression, as though the losses of the preceding day had touched and saddened them deeply; but, to tell the truth, as none of them had lost any one very near to him, this expression of sorrow was an official expression, which they merely felt it to be their duty to exhibit.

On the contrary, Kalugin and the colonel were ready to see an engagement of the same sort every day, pro-

vided that they might receive a gold sword or the rank of major-general — notwithstanding the fact that they were very fine fellows.

I like it when any warrior who destroys millions to gratify his ambition is called a monster. Only question any Ensign Petrushkoff, and Sub-Lieutenant Antonoff, and so on, on their word of honor, and every one of them is a petty Napoleon, a petty monster, and ready to bring on a battle on the instant, to murder a hundred men, merely for the sake of receiving an extra star of an order or an increase of a third in his pay.

"No, excuse me," said the colonel; "it began first on the left flank. *I was there myself.*"

"Possibly," answered Kalugin. "*I was farther on the right; I went there twice. Once I was in search of the general, and the second time I went merely to inspect the lodgments. It was a hot place.*"

"Yes, of course, Kalugin knows," said Prince Galtzin to the colonel. "You know that V. told *me* to-day that you were a brave fellow." ....

"But the losses, the losses were terrible," said the colonel. "*I lost four hundred men from my regiment. It 's a wonder that I escaped from there alive.*"

At this moment, the figure of Mikhaïloff, with his head bandaged, appeared at the other extremity of the boulevard, coming to meet these gentlemen.

"What, are you wounded, captain?" said Kalugin.

"Yes, slightly, with a stone," replied Mikhaïloff.

"Has the flag been lowered yet?"[1] inquired Prince Galtzin, gazing over the staff-captain's cap, and addressing himself to no one in particular.

"*Non, pas encore,*" answered Mikhaïloff, who wished to show that he understood and spoke French.

"Is the truce still in force?" said Galtzin, addressing him courteously in Russian, and thereby intimating — so it seemed to the captain — It must be difficult for you to speak French, so why is it not better to talk in your own tongue simply?.... And with this the adju-

[1] This sentence is in French.

tants left him. The staff-captain again felt lonely, as on the preceding day, and, exchanging salutes with various gentlemen, — some he did not care, and others he did not dare, to join, — he seated himself near Kazarsky's monument, and lighted a cigarette.

Baron Pesth also had come to the boulevard. He had been telling how he had gone over to arrange the truce, and had conversed with the French officers, and he declared that one had said to him, "If daylight had held off another half-hour, these ambushes would have been retaken;" and that he had replied, "Sir, I refrain from saying no, in order not to give you the lie," and how well he had said it, and so on.

But, in reality, although he had had a hand in the truce, he had not dared to say anything very particular there, although he had been very desirous of talking with the French (for it is awfully jolly to talk with Frenchmen!). Yunker Baron Pesth had marched up and down the line for a long time, incessantly inquiring of the Frenchmen who were near him: "To what regiment do you belong?" They answered him; and that was the end of it.

When he walked too far along the line, the French sentry, not suspecting that this soldier understood French, cursed him. "He has come to spy out our works, the cursed...." said he; and, in consequence, Yunker Baron Pesth, taking no further interest in the truce, went home, and thought out on the way thither those French phrases, which he had now repeated. Captain Zoboff was also on the boulevard, talking loudly, and Captain Obzhogoff, in a very disheveled condition, and an artillery captain, who courted no one, and was happy in the love of the yunkers, and all the faces which had been there on the day before, and all still actuated by the same motives. No one was missing except Praskukhin, Neferdoff, and some others, whom hardly any one remembered or thought of now, though their bodies were not yet washed, laid out, and interred in the earth.

CHAPTER XVI

WHITE flags are hung out from our bastion and from the trenches of the French, and in the blooming valley between them lie disfigured corpses, shoeless, in garments of gray or blue, which laborers are engaged in carrying off and heaping upon carts. The odor of the dead bodies fills the air. Throngs of people have poured out of Sevastopol and from the French camp, to gaze upon this spectacle, and they press one after the other with eager and benevolent curiosity.

Listen to what these people are saying.

Here, in a group of Russians and French who have come together, is a young officer, who speaks French badly, but well enough to make himself understood, examining a cartridge-box of the guards.

"And what is this bird here for?" says he.

"Because it is a cartridge-box belonging to a regiment of the guards, monsieur, and bears the imperial eagle."

"And do you belong to the guard?"

"Pardon, monsieur, I belong to the sixth regiment of the line."

"And this — bought where?" asks the officer, pointing to a cigar-holder of yellow wood, in which the Frenchman is smoking his cigarette.

"At Balaklava, monsieur. It is very plain, of palm-wood."

"Pretty!" says the officer, guided in his conversation not so much by his own wishes as by the words which he knows.

"If you will have the kindness to keep it as a souvenir of this meeting, you will confer an obligation on me."

And the polite Frenchman blows out the cigarette, and hands the holder over to the officer, with a little bow. The officer gives him his, and all the members of the group, Frenchmen as well as Russians, appear very much pleased and smile.

Then a bold infantryman, in a pink shirt, with his overcoat hanging from his shoulders, accompanied by

two other soldiers, who, with their hands behind their backs, were standing behind him, with merry, curious countenances, stepped up to a Frenchman, and requested a light for his pipe. The Frenchman brightened his fire, stirred up his short pipe, and shook out a light for the Russian.

"Tobacco good!" said the soldier in the pink shirt; and the spectators smile.

"Yes, good tobacco, Turkish tobacco," says the Frenchman. "And your tobacco — Russian? — good?"

"Russian, good,"[1] says the soldier in the pink shirt; whereupon those present shake with laughter. "The French not good — *bon jour, monsieur*," says the soldier in the pink shirt, letting fly his entire charge of knowledge in the language at once, as he laughs and taps the Frenchman on the stomach. The French join in the laugh.

"They are not handsome, these beasts of Russians," says a zouave, amid the crowd of Frenchmen.

"What are they laughing about?" says another black-complexioned one, with an Italian accent, approaching our men.

"Caftan good," says the audacious soldier, staring at the zouave's embroidered coat-skirts, and then there is another laugh.

"Don't leave your lines; back to your places, *sacré nom!*" shouts a French corporal, and the soldiers disperse with evident reluctance.

In the meantime, our young cavalry officer is making the tour of the French officers. The conversation turns on some Count Sazonoff, "with whom I was very well acquainted, monsieur," says a French officer, with one epaulet — "he is one of those real Russian counts, of whom we are so fond."

"There is a Sazonoff with whom I am acquainted," said the cavalry officer, "but he is not a count, so far as I know, at least; a little dark-complexioned man, of about your age."

"Exactly, monsieur, that is the man. Oh, how I should like to see that dear count! If you see him,

[1] He pronounces *bon — been.* — Tr.

pray present my compliments to him — Captain Latour," says he, bowing.

"Is n't this a terrible business that we are conducting here? It was hot work last night, was n't it?" says the cavalry officer, wishing to continue the conversation, and pointing to the dead bodies.

"Oh, frightful, monsieur! But what brave fellows your soldiers are — what brave fellows! It is a pleasure to fight with such valiant fellows."

"It must be admitted that your men do not hang back, either," says the cavalryman, with a bow, and the conviction that he is very amiable.

But enough of this.

Let us rather observe this lad of ten, clad in an ancient cap, his father's probably, shoes worn on bare feet, and nankeen breeches, held up by a single suspender, who has climbed over the wall at the very beginning of the truce, and has been roaming about the ravine, staring with dull curiosity at the French, and at the bodies which are lying on the earth, and plucking the blue wild-flowers with which the valley is studded. On his way home with a large bouquet, he held his nose because of the odor which the wind wafted to him, and paused beside a pile of corpses, which had been carried off the field, and stared long at one terrible, headless body, which chanced to be the nearest to him. After standing there for a long while, he stepped up closer, and touched with his foot the stiffened arm of the corpse which protruded. The arm swayed a little. He touched it again, and with more vigor. The arm swung back, and then fell into place again. And at once the boy uttered a shriek, hid his face in the flowers, and ran off to the fortifications as fast as he could go.

Yes, white flags are hung out from the bastion and the trenches, the flowery vale is filled with dead bodies, the splendid sun sinks into the blue sea, and the blue sea undulates and glitters in the golden rays of the sun. Thousands of people congregate, gaze, talk, and smile at each other. And why do not Christian people, who profess the one great law of love and self-sacrifice, when

they behold what they have wrought, fall in repentance upon their knees before Him who, when He gave them life, implanted in the soul of each of them, together with a fear of death, a love of the good and the beautiful, and, with tears of joy and happiness, embrace each other like brothers? No! But it is a comfort to think that it was not we who began this war, that we are only defending our own country, our fatherland. The white flags have been hauled down, and again the weapons of death and suffering are shrieking; again innocent blood is shed, and groans and curses are audible.

I have now said all that I wish to say at this time. But a heavy thought overpowers me. Perhaps it should not have been said; perhaps what I have said belongs to one of those evil truths which, unconsciously concealed in the soul of each man, should not be uttered, lest they become pernicious, as the lees of wine should not be shaken, lest it be thereby spoiled.

Where is the expression of evil which should be avoided? Where is the expression of good which should be imitated in this sketch? Who is the villain, who the hero? All are good, and all are evil.

Neither Kalugin, with his brilliant bravery — *bravoure de gentilhomme* — and his vanity, the instigator of all deeds; nor Praskukhin, the empty-headed, harmless man, though he fell in battle for the faith, the throne, and his native land; nor Mikhaïloff, with his shyness; nor Pesth, a child with no firm convictions or principles, can be either the heroes or the villains of the tale.

The hero of my tale, whom I love with all the strength of my soul, whom I have tried to set forth in all his beauty, and who has always been, is, and always will be most beautiful, is — the truth.

SEVASTOPOL IN AUGUST, 1855

CHAPTER I

AT the end of August, along the rocky highway to Sevastopol, between Duvanka[1] and Bakhtchisaraï, through the thick, hot dust, at a foot-pace, drove an officer's light cart, that peculiar telyezhka, not now to be met with, which stands about half-way between a Jewish britchka, a Russian traveling-carriage, and a basket-wagon. In the front of the wagon, jerking the reins, squatted the servant, clad in a nankeen coat and an officer's cap, which had become quite limp; behind, on bundles and packages covered with a military coat, sat an infantry officer, in a summer overcoat.

As well as he could be judged in his sitting position, the officer was not tall of stature, but extremely thick, and that not so much from shoulder to shoulder as from chest to back he was broad and thick; and his neck and the base of the head were excessively developed and tense. His waist, so called — a receding strip in the center of his body — did not exist in his case; but neither had he any belly; on the contrary, he was rather thin than otherwise, particularly in the face, which was overspread with an unhealthy yellowish sunburn. His face would have been handsome had it not been for a certain bloated appearance, and the soft, yet not elderly, heavy wrinkles that flowed together and enlarged his features, imparting to the whole countenance a general expression of coarseness and of lack of freshness. His eyes were small, brown, extremely searching, even bold; his mustache was very thick, but the ends were kept constantly short by his habit of gnawing them; and his chin, and his cheek-bones in particular, were covered

[1] The last station before Sevastopol.

with a remarkably strong, thick, and black beard, of two days' growth.

The officer had been wounded on the 10th of May, by a splinter, in the head, on which he still wore a bandage, and, having now felt perfectly well for the last week, he had come out of the Simferopol Hospital to rejoin his regiment, which was stationed somewhere in the direction from which shots could be heard; but whether that was in Sevastopol itself, in the northern suburb, or at Inkerman, he had not so far succeeded in ascertaining with much accuracy from any one.

Shots were still audible near at hand, especially at intervals, when the hills did not interfere, or when borne on the wind with great distinctness and frequency, and apparently near at hand. Then it seemed as though some explosion shook the air, and caused an involuntary shudder. Then, one after the other, followed less resounding reports in quick succession, like a drum-beat, interrupted at times by a startling roar. Then, everything mingled in a sort of reverberating crash, resembling peals of thunder, when a thunderstorm is in full force, and the rain has just begun to pour down in floods; every one said, and it could be heard, that a frightful bombardment was in progress.

The officer kept urging on his servant, and seemed desirous of arriving as speedily as possible. They were met by a long train of Russian peasant carts, which had carried provisions into Sevastopol, and were now returning with sick and wounded soldiers in gray coats, sailors in black paletots, volunteers in red fezzes, and bearded militiamen. The officer's light cart had to halt in the thick, immovable cloud of dust raised by the train of wagons, and the officer, blinking and frowning with the dust that stuffed his eyes and ears, gazed at the faces of the sick and wounded as they passed.

"Ah, there's a weak young soldier from our company," said the servant, turning to his master, and pointing to the wagon full of wounded, which was just on a line with them at the moment.

On the cart, toward the front, a bearded Russian,

in a lamb's-wool cap, was seated sidewise, and, holding the stock of his whip under his elbow, was tying on the lash. Behind him in the cart, about five soldiers, in different positions, were shaking about. One, though pale and thin, with his arm in a bandage, and his overcoat hanging, with sleeves unused, from his shoulders, over his shirt, was sitting up bravely in the middle of the cart, and tried to touch his cap on seeing the officer, but immediately afterward (recollecting, probably, that he was wounded) he pretended that he only wanted to scratch his head. Another, beside him, was lying flat on the bottom of the wagon; all that was visible was two hands, as they clung to the rails of the wagon, and his knees uplifted limp as mops, as they swayed about in various directions. A third, with a swollen face and a bandaged head, on which was placed his soldier's cap, sat on one side, with his legs dangling over the wheel, and, with his elbows resting on his knees, seemed immersed in thought. It was to him that the passing officer addressed himself.

"Dolzhnikoff!" he exclaimed.

"Here," replied the soldier, opening his eyes, and pulling off his cap, in such a thick and halting bass voice that it seemed as though twenty soldiers had uttered an exclamation at one and the same time.

"Where were you wounded, my boy?"

The leaden and swimming eyes of the soldier grew animated; he evidently recognized his officer.

"I wish yourhonor health!" he began again, in the same abrupt bass as before.

"Where is the regiment stationed now?"

"It was stationed in Sevastopol, but they were to move on Wednesday, yourhonor."

"Where to?"

"I don't know; it must have been to the Sivernaya, yourhonor! To-day, yourhonor," he added in a drawling voice, as he put on his cap, "they have begun to fire clear across, mostly with bombs, that even go as far as the bay; they are fighting horribly to-day, so that...."

It was impossible to hear what the soldier said fur-

ther; but it was evident, from the expression of his countenance and from his attitude, that he was uttering discouraging remarks, with the touch of malice of a man who is suffering.

The traveling officer, Lieutenant Kozeltzoff, was no common officer. He was not one of those that live so and so and do thus and so because others live and do thus; he did whatever he pleased, and others did the same, and were convinced that it was well. He was rather richly endowed by nature with small gifts: he sang well, played on the guitar, talked very cleverly, and wrote very easily, particularly official documents, in which he had practised his hand in his capacity of adjutant of the battalion; but the most noticeable point in his character was his egotistical energy, which, although chiefly founded on this array of petty talents, constituted in itself a sharp and striking feature. His egotism was of the sort that is most frequently found developed in purely masculine and especially in military circles, and which had become a part of his life to such a degree that he understood no other choice than to domineer or to humiliate himself; and his egotism was the mainspring even of his private impulses; he liked to usurp the first place over people with whom he put himself on a level.

"Well! it 's absurd of me to listen to what a Moskva[1] chatters!" muttered the lieutenant, experiencing a certain weight of apathy in his heart, and a dimness of thought, which the sight of the transport full of wounded and the words of the soldier, whose significance was emphasized and confirmed by the sounds of the bombardment, had left with him. "*That Moskva is ridiculous!* Drive on, Nikolaeff! go ahead! Are you asleep?" he added, rather fretfully, to the servant, as he rearranged the skirts of his coat.

The reins were tightened, Nikolaeff clacked his lips, and the wagon moved on at a trot.

"We will only halt a minute for food, and will proceed at once, this very day," said the officer.

[1] In many regiments the officers call a soldier, half in scorn, half caressingly, *Moskva* (Moscovite), or *prisyaga* (an oath).

CHAPTER II

As he entered the street of the ruined remains of the stone walls forming the Tartar houses of Duvanka, Lieutenant Kozeltzoff was stopped by a transport of bombs and cannon-balls, which were on their way to Sevastopol, and had accumulated on the road. Two infantry soldiers were seated in the dust, on the stones of a ruined garden-wall by the roadside, devouring a watermelon and bread.

"Have you come far, fellow-countryman?" said one of them, as he chewed his bread, to a soldier with a small knapsack on his back, who had halted near them.

"I have come from my government to join my regiment," replied the soldier, turning his eyes away from the watermelon, and readjusting the sack on his back. "There we were, two weeks ago, at work on the hay, a whole troop of us; but now they have drafted all of us, and we don't know where our regiment is at the present time. They say that our men went on the Korabelnaya last week. Have you heard anything, gentlemen?"

"It's stationed in the town, comrade, in the town," said the second, an old soldier of the reserves, digging away with his clasp-knife at the white, unripe melon. "We have just come from there, this afternoon. It's terrible, my boy!"

"How so, gentlemen?"

"Don't you hear? They are firing all around to-day, so that there is not a whole spot anywhere. It is impossible to say how many of our brethren have been killed." And the speaker waved his hand and adjusted his cap.

The passing soldier shook his head thoughtfully, gave a clack with his tongue, then pulled his pipe from his boot-leg, and, without filling it, stirred up the half-burned tobacco, lit a bit of tinder from the soldier who was smoking, and raised his cap.

"There is no one like God, gentlemen! I ask your

pardon," said he, and, with a shake of the sack on his back, he went his way.

"Hey, there! you 'd better wait," said the man who was digging out the watermelon, with an air of conviction.

"It makes no difference!" muttered the traveler, threading his way among the wheels of the assembled wagons.

CHAPTER III

The posting-station was full of people when Kozeltzoff drove up to it. The first person whom he encountered, on the porch itself, was a thin and very young man, the superintendent, who continued his altercation with two officers, who had followed him out.

"It 's not three days only, but ten that you will have to wait. Even generals wait, my good sirs!" said the superintendent, with a desire to administer a prick to the travelers; "and I am not going to harness up for you."

"Then don't give anybody horses, if there are none! But why furnish them to some lackey or other with baggage?" shouted the elder of the two officers, with a glass of tea in his hand, and plainly avoiding the use of pronouns,[1] but giving it to be understood that he might very easily address the superintendent as "*thou*."

"Judge for yourself, now, Mr. Superintendent," said the younger officer, with some hesitation. "We don't want to go for our own pleasure. We must certainly be needed, since we have been called for. And I certainly shall report to the general. But this, of course, you know — that you are not paying proper respect to the military profession."

"You are always spoiling things," the elder man interrupted, with vexation. "You only hinder me; you must know how to talk to him. Here, now, he has lost his respect. Horses this very instant, I say!"

[1] This effect cannot be reproduced in English.

"I should be glad to give them to you, batiushka,[1] but where am I to get them?"

After a brief silence, the superintendent began to grow irritated, and to talk, flourishing his hands the while.

"I understand, batiushka. And I know all about it myself. But what are you going to do? Only give me" — here a ray of hope gleamed across the faces of the officers — "only give me a chance to live until the end of the month, and you won't see me here any longer. I'd rather go on the Malakhoff hill, by Heavens! than stay here. Let them do what they please about it! There's not a single sound team in the station this day, and the horses haven't seen a wisp of hay these three days." And the superintendent disappeared behind the gate.

Kozeltzoff entered the room in company with the officers.

"Well," said the elder officer, quite calmly, to the younger one, although but a second before he had appeared to be greatly irritated, "we have been traveling these three weeks, and we will wait a little longer. There's no harm done. We shall get there at last."

The dirty, smoky apartment was so filled with officers and trunks that it was with difficulty that Kozeltzoff found a place near the window, where he seated himself; he began to roll himself a cigarette, as he glanced at the faces and lent an ear to the conversations.

To the right of the door, near a crippled and greasy table, upon which stood two samovars, whose copper had turned green in spots, here and there, and where sugar was spread out in various papers, sat the principal group: a young officer, without mustache, in a new, short, wadded summer coat, was pouring water into the teapot; four such young officers were there, in different corners of the room. One of them had placed some sort of fur coat under his head, and was fast asleep on the divan. Another, standing by the table, was cutting

[1] "My good sir," literally, "little father," a familiarly respectful mode of address.

up some roast mutton for an officer without an arm, who was seated at the table.

Two officers, one in an adjutant's overcoat, the other in an infantry overcoat, a thin one, however, and with a satchel strapped over his shoulder, were sitting near the oven-bench, and it was evident, from the very way in which they stared at the rest, and from the manner in which the one with the satchel smoked his cigar, that they were not line officers on duty at the front, and that they were glad of it.

Not that there was any scorn apparent in their manner, but there was a certain self-satisfied tranquillity, founded partly on money and partly on their close intimacy with generals, — a certain consciousness of superiority which even extended to a desire to hide it.

A thick-lipped young doctor and an officer of artillery, with a German cast of countenance, were seated almost on the feet of the young officer who was sleeping on the divan, and counting over their money.

There were four officer's servants, some dozing and others busy with the trunks and packages near the door.

Among all these faces, Kozeltzoff did not find a single familiar one; but he began to listen with curiosity to the conversation. The young officers, who, as he instantly decided from their looks alone, had but just come out of the military academy, pleased him, and, what was the principal point, they reminded him that his brother had also come from the military academy, and should have recently joined one of the batteries of Sevastopol.

But everything about the officer with the satchel, whose face he had seen before somewhere, seemed bold and repulsive to him. He even left the window, and, going to the stove-bench, seated himself on it, with the thought that he would "put the fellow down if he took it into his head to say anything." In general, purely as a brave "line" officer, he did not like "the staff," such as he had recognized these two officers to be at the first glance.

CHAPTER IV

"But this is dreadfully annoying," said one of the young officers, "to be so near, and yet not be able to get there. Perhaps there will be an action this very day, and we shall not be there."

In the sharp voice and the mottled freshness of the color that swept across the youthful face of this officer as he spoke, there was apparent the sweet young timidity of the man who is constantly afraid lest his every word shall not turn out exactly right.

The one-armed officer glanced at him with a smile.

"You will get there soon enough, I assure you," he said.

The young officer looked with respect at the haggard face of the armless officer, so unexpectedly illuminated by a smile, held his peace for a while, and busied himself once more with his tea. In fact, the one-armed officer's face, his attitude, and, most of all, the empty sleeve of his coat, expressed much of that tranquil indifference which may be explained in this way — that he looked upon every conversation and every occurrence as though saying, "That is all very fine; I know all about that, and I can do a little of that myself, if I only choose."

"What is our decision to be?" said the young officer again to his companion in the short coat. "Shall we pass the night here, or shall we proceed with our own horse?"

His comrade declined to proceed.

"Just imagine, captain," said the one who was pouring the tea, turning to the one-armed man, and picking up the knife that the latter had dropped, "they told us that horses were frightfully dear in Sevastopol, so we bought a horse in partnership at Simferopol."

"They made you pay pretty high for it, I fancy."

"Really, I do not know, captain; we paid ninety rubles for it and the wagon. Is that very dear?" he added, turning to all the company, and to Kozeltzoff, who was staring at him.

"It was not dear, if the horse is young," said Kozeltzoff.

"Really? but they told us that it was dear. Only, she limps a little, but that will pass off. They told us that she was very strong."

"What military academy are you from?" asked Kozeltzoff, who wished to inquire for his brother.

"We are just from the regiment of the nobility; there are six of us, and we are on our way to Sevastopol at our own desire," said the talkative young officer. "But we do not know where our battery is; some say that it is in Sevastopol, others that it is at Odessa."

"Was it not possible to find out at Simferopol?" asked Kozeltzoff.

"They do not know there. Just imagine, one of our comrades went to the headquarters there, and they were impertinent to him. You can imagine how disagreeable that was! Would you like to have me make you a cigarette?" he said at that moment to the one-armed officer, who was just pulling out his cigarette-case.

He waited on the latter with a sort of servile enthusiasm.

"And are you from Sevastopol also?" he went on. "Oh, good heavens, how wonderful that is! How much we did think of you, and of all our heroes, in Petersburg," he said, turning to Kozeltzoff with respect and good-natured flattery.

"Really? And now, perhaps, you may have to go back?" inquired the lieutenant.

"That is just what we are afraid of. You can imagine that, after having bought the horse, and provided ourselves with all the necessaries, — a coffee-pot with a spirit-lamp, and other indispensable trifles, — we have no money left," he said, in a low voice, as he glanced at his companion; "so that, if we have to go back, we don't know what is to be done."

"Have you received no money for traveling expenses?" inquired Kozeltzoff.

"No," replied he, in a whisper; "they only promised to give it to us here."

"Have you the certificate?"

"I know that .... the principal thing .... is the certificate; but a senator in Moscow, — he 's my uncle, — when I was at his house, said that they would give it to us here; otherwise, he would have given me some himself. So they will give it to us here?"

"Most certainly they will."

"I too think that they will," he said, in a tone which showed that, after having made the same identical inquiry in thirty posting-stations, and having everywhere received different answers, he no longer believed any one implicitly.

CHAPTER V

"WHO ordered beet-soup?" called out the slatternly mistress of the house, a fat woman of forty, as she entered the room with a bowl of soup.

The conversation ceased at once, and all who were in the room fixed their eyes on the woman. One officer even instigated another officer, by a wink, to look at her.

"Ah, it was Kozeltzoff who ordered it," said the young officer. "He must be waked. Get up for your dinner," he said, approaching the sleeper on the divan, and jogging his elbow.

A young lad of seventeen, with merry black eyes and red cheeks, sprang energetically from the sofa, and stood in the middle of the room, rubbing his eyes.

"Ah, excuse me, please," he said to the doctor, whom he had touched in rising.

Lieutenant Kozeltzoff immediately recognized his brother, and stepped up to him.

"Don't you know me?" he said, with a smile.

"A-a-a-h!" exclaimed the younger brother; "this is astonishing!" And he began to kiss his brother.

They kissed twice, but hesitated at the third repetition, as though the thought had occurred to both of them: —

"Why is it necessary to do it exactly three times?"

"Well, *how* I am delighted!" said the elder, looking

at his brother. "Let us go out on the porch; we can have a talk."

"Come, come. I don't want any soup, you eat it, Federsohn!" he said to his comrade.

"But you wanted something to eat."

"I don't want anything."

When they emerged on the porch, the younger kept asking his brother, "Well, how are you; tell me all about it." And still he kept on saying how glad he was to see him, but he told nothing himself.

When five minutes had elapsed, during which time they had succeeded in becoming somewhat silent, the elder brother inquired why the younger had not gone into the guards, as they had all expected him to do.

He wanted to get to Sevastopol as speedily as possible, he said; for if things turned out favorably there, he could get advancement more rapidly than in the guards. There it takes ten years to reach the grade of colonel, while here Todleben had risen in two years from lieutenant-colonel to general. Well, and if one did get killed, there was nothing to be done.

"What a fellow you are!" said his brother, smiling.

"But the principal thing, do you know, brother," said the younger, smiling and blushing as though he were preparing to say something very disgraceful, "all this is nonsense, and the principal reason why I asked it was that I was ashamed to live in Petersburg when men are dying for their country here. Yes, and I wanted to be with you," he added, with still greater shamefacedness.

"How absurd you are!" said the elder brother, pulling out his cigarette-case, and not even glancing at him. "It's a pity, though, that we can't be together."

"Now, honestly, is it so terrible in the bastions?" inquired the younger man, abruptly.

"It is terrible at first, but you get used to it afterward. It's nothing. You will see for yourself."

"And tell me still another thing. What do you think? — will Sevastopol be taken? I think that it will not."

"God knows!"

"But one thing is annoying. Just imagine what bad luck! A whole bundle was stolen from us on the road, and it had my shako in it, so that now I am in a dreadful predicament; and I don't know how I am to show myself."

The younger Kozeltzoff, Vladimir, greatly resembled his brother Mikhaïl, but he resembled him as a budding rose bush resembles a wild rose bush that is out of flower. His hair was chestnut also, but it was thick and lay in curls on his temples. On the soft white back of his neck there was a blond lock; a sign of good luck, so the nurses say. The full-blooded crimson of youth did not stand fixed on the soft, white hue of his face, but flashed up and betrayed all the movements of his mind. He had the same eyes as his brother, but they were more widely opened, and clearer, which appeared the more peculiar because they were veiled frequently by a slight moisture. A golden down was sprouting on his cheeks, and over his ruddy lips, which were very often folded into a shy smile, displaying teeth of dazzling whiteness. He was a well-formed and broad-shouldered fellow, in unbuttoned coat, from beneath which was visible a red shirt with a slanting collar. As he stood before his brother, leaning his elbows on the railing of the porch, with cigarette in hand and innocent joy in his face and gesture, he was so agreeable and comely a youth that any one would have gazed at him with delight. He was extremely pleased with his brother, he looked at him with respect and pride, fancying him his hero; but in some ways, so far as judgments on worldly culture, ability to talk French, behavior in the society of distinguished people, dancing, and so on, he was somewhat ashamed of him, looked down on him, and even cherished a hope of improving him if such a thing were possible.

All his impressions, so far, were from Petersburg, from the house of a lady who was fond of good-looking young fellows and who had had him spend his holidays with her, and from Moscow, from the house of a senator, where he had once danced at a great ball.

CHAPTER VI

HAVING nearly talked their fill and having arrived at the feeling that you frequently experience, that there is little in common between you, though you love one another, the brothers were silent for a few moments.

"Pick up your things and we will set out at once," said the elder.

The younger suddenly blushed, stammered, and became confused.

"Are we to go straight to Sevastopol?" he inquired, after a momentary pause.

"Why, yes. You can't have many things, and we can manage to carry them, I think."

"Very good! we will start at once," said the younger, with a sigh, and he went inside.

But he paused in the vestibule without opening the door, dropped his head gloomily, and began to reflect.

"Straight to Sevastopol, on the instant, within range of the bombs .... frightful! It's no matter, however; it must have come sometime. Now, at all events, with my brother .... "

The fact was that it was only now, at the thought that, once seated in the cart, he would enter Sevastopol without dismounting from it, and that no chance occurrence could any longer detain him, that the danger which he was seeking clearly presented itself to him, and he was troubled at the very thought of its nearness. He managed to control himself after a fashion, and entered the room; but a quarter of an hour elapsed, and still he had not rejoined his brother, so that the latter opened the door at last, in order to call him. The younger Kozeltzoff, in the attitude of a naughty school-boy, was saying something to an officer named P. When his brother opened the door, he became utterly confused.

"Immediately. I'll come out in a minute!" he cried, waving his hand at his brother. "Wait for me there, please."

A moment later he emerged, in fact, and approached his brother, with a deep sigh.

"Just imagine! I cannot go with you, brother," he said.

"What? What nonsense is this?"

"I will tell you the whole truth, Misha! Not one of us has any money, and we are all in debt to that staff-captain whom you saw there. It is horribly mortifying!"

The elder brother frowned, and did not break the silence for a long while.

"Do you owe much?" he asked, glancing askance at his brother.

"A great deal .... no, not a great deal; but I am dreadfully ashamed of it. He has paid for me for three stages, and all his sugar is gone, so that I do not know .... yes, and we played at preference. I am a little in his debt there, too."

"This is bad, Volodya! Now, what would you have done if you had not met me?" said the elder, sternly, without looking at his brother.

"Why, I was thinking, brother, that I should get that traveling-money at Sevastopol, and that I would give him that. Surely, that can be done? And it will be better for me to go with him to-morrow."

The elder brother pulled out his purse, and, with fingers that shook a little, he took out two ten-ruble notes, and one for three rubles.

"This is all the money I have," said he. "How much do you owe?"

Kozeltzoff did not speak the exact truth when he said that this was all the money he had. He had, besides, four gold pieces sewn into his cuff, in case of an emergency; but he had taken a vow not to touch them.

It appeared that Kozeltzoff, what with preference and sugar, was in debt to the amount of eight rubles only. The elder brother gave him this sum, merely remarking that one should not play preference when one had no money.

"For what stakes did you play?"

The younger brother answered not a word. His

brother's question seemed to him to cast a reflection on his honor. Vexation at himself, shame at his conduct, which could give rise to such a suspicion, and the insult from his brother, of whom he was so fond, produced upon his sensitive nature so deeply painful an impression that he made no reply. Conscious that he was not in a condition to restrain the sobs which rose in his throat, he took the money without glancing at it, and went back to his comrades.

CHAPTER VII

Nikolaeff, who had fortified himself at Duvanka with two jugs of vodka, purchased from a soldier who was peddling it on the bridge, gave the reins a jerk, and the team jolted away over the stony road, shaded here and there, which led along the Belbek to Sevastopol; but the brothers, whose legs jostled each other, maintained a stubborn silence, although they were thinking of each other every instant.

"Why did he insult me?" thought the younger. "Could he not have held his tongue about that? It is exactly as though he thought that I was a thief; yes, and now he is angry, apparently, so that we have quarreled for good. And how splendid it would have been for us to be together in Sevastopol. Two brothers, on friendly terms, both fighting the foe! one of them, the elder, though not very cultivated, yet a valiant warrior, and the other younger, but a brave fellow too. In a week's time I would have shown every one that I am not such a youngster after all! I shall cease to blush, there will be manliness in my countenance, and, though my mustache is not very large now, it would grow to a good size by that time;" and he pulled the down which was making its appearance round the edges of his mouth. "Perhaps we shall arrive to-day, and get directly into the conflict, my brother and I. He must be obstinate and very brave, one of those who do not say much, but act better than others. I should like to know," he con-

tinued, "whether he is squeezing me against the side of the wagon on purpose or not. He probably is conscious that I feel awkward, and he is pretending not to notice me. We shall arrive to-day," he went on with his argument, pressing close to the side of the wagon, and fearing to move lest his brother should observe that he was uncomfortable, "and, all at once, we shall go straight to the bastion. We shall both go together, I with the guns, and my brother with his company. All of a sudden, the French throw themselves on us. I begin to fire, and fire on them. I kill a terrible number; but they still continue to run straight at me. Now, it is impossible to fire any longer, and there is no hope for me; all at once my brother rushes out in front with his sword, and I grasp my gun, and we rush on with the soldiers. The French throw themselves on my brother. I hasten up; I kill one Frenchman, then another, and I save my brother. I am wounded in one arm; I seize my gun with the other, and continue my flight; but my brother is slain by my side by the bullets. I halt for a moment, and gaze at him so sorrowfully; then I straighten myself up and shout: 'Follow me! We will avenge him! I loved my brother more than any one in the world,' I shall say, 'and I have lost him. Let us avenge him! Let us annihilate the foe, or let us all die together there!' All shout, and fling themselves after me. Then the whole French army makes a sortie, including even Pélissier himself. We all fight; but, at last, I am wounded a second, a third time, and I fall, wounded unto death. Then, all rush up to me. Gortchakoff comes up and asks what I would like. I say that I want nothing — except that I may be laid beside my brother, that I wish to die with him. They carry me, and lay me down by the side of my brother's bloody corpse. Then I shall raise myself, and merely say: 'Yes, you did not understand how to value two men who really loved their fatherland; now they have both fallen, — and may God forgive you!' and I shall die."

Who knows in what measure these dreams will be realized?

"Have you ever been in a hand-to-hand fight?" he suddenly inquired of his brother, quite forgetting that he had not meant to speak to him.

"No, not once," answered the elder. "Our regiment has lost two thousand men, all on the works; and I, also, was wounded there. War is not carried on in the least as you fancy, Volodya."

The word "Volodya" touched the younger brother. He wanted to come to an explanation with his brother, who had not the least idea that he had offended Volodya.

"You are not angry with me, Misha?" he said, after a momentary silence.

"What about?"

"Why, because .... because we had such a .... nothing."

"Not in the least," replied the elder, turning to him, and slapping him on the leg.

"Then forgive me, Misha, if I have wounded you."

And the younger brother turned aside, in order to hide the tears that suddenly started to his eyes.

CHAPTER VIII

"Is this Sevastopol already?" asked the younger brother, as they ascended the hill.

And before them appeared the bay, with its masts of ships, its shipping, and the sea, with the hostile fleet in the distance; the white batteries on the shore, the barracks, the aqueducts, the docks, and the buildings of the town, and the white and lilac clouds of smoke rising incessantly over the yellow hills, which surrounded the town and stood out against the blue sky, in the rosy rays of the sun, which was reflected by the waves, and sinking toward the horizon of the shadowy sea.

Volodya, without the slightest shudder, gazed upon this terrible place of which he had thought so much; on the contrary, he did so with an esthetic enjoyment, and a heroic sense of self-satisfaction at the idea that he would be there in another half-hour, that he would

behold that really charmingly original spectacle — and he stared with concentrated attention from that moment until they arrived at the north fortification, at the baggage-train of his brother's regiment, where they were to ascertain with certainty the situations of the regiment and the battery.

The officer in charge of the train lived near the so-called new town (huts built of boards by the sailors' families), in a tent, connecting with a tolerably large shed, constructed out of green oak boughs, that were not yet entirely withered.

The brothers found the officer seated before a greasy table, upon which stood a glass of cold tea, a tray with vodka, crumbs of dry sturgeon roe, and bread, clad only in a shirt of a dirty yellow hue, and engaged in counting a huge pile of bank-bills on a large abacus.

But before describing the personality of the officer, and his conversation, it is indispensable that we should inspect with more attention the interior of his shed, and become a little acquainted, at least, with his mode of life and his occupations. The new shed, like those built for generals and regimental commanders, was large, closely wattled, and comfortably arranged, with little tables and benches made of turf. The sides and roof were hung with three rugs, to keep the leaves from showering down, and, though extremely ugly, they were new, and certainly costly.

Upon the iron bed, which stood beneath the principal rug, with a young lady on horseback depicted on it, lay a plush coverlet, of a brilliant crimson, a torn and dirty pillow, and a racoon-lined cloak. On the table stood a mirror in a silver frame, a silver brush, frightfully dirty, a broken horn comb, full of greasy hair, a silver candlestick, a bottle of liqueur with a huge gold and red label, a gold watch with a portrait of Peter I., two gold pens, a small box containing pills of some sort, a crust of bread, and some old castaway cards, and there were bottles, both full and empty, under the bed.

This officer had charge of the commissariat of the

regiment and the fodder of the horses. With him lived his great friend, the commissioner who had charge of the operations.

At the moment when the brothers entered, the latter was asleep in the tent, and the commissary officer was making up his accounts of the government money, in anticipation of the end of the month. The commissary officer had a very comely and warlike exterior. His stature was tall, his mustache huge, and he possessed a respectable amount of plumpness. The only disagreeable points about him were a certain perspiration and puffiness of the whole face, which almost concealed his small gray eyes (as though he was filled up with porter), and an excessive lack of cleanliness, from his thin, greasy hair, to his big, bare feet, thrust into some sort of ermine slippers.

"Money, money!" said Kozeltzoff number one, entering the shed, and fixing his eyes, with involuntary greed, upon the pile of bank-notes. "You might lend me half of that, Vasily Mikharlitch!"

The commissary officer cringed at the sight of his visitors, and, sweeping up his money, he bowed to them without rising.

"Oh, if it only belonged to me! It's government money, my dear fellow. And who is this you have with you?" said he, thrusting the money into a coffer which stood beside him, and staring at Volodya.

"This is my brother, who has just come from the military academy. We have both come to learn from you where our regiment is stationed."

"Sit down, gentlemen," said the officer, rising, and going into the tent, without paying any heed to his guests. "Won't you have something to drink? Some porter, for instance?" said he.

"Don't put yourself out, Vasily Mikharlitch."

Volodya was impressed by the size of the commissary officer, by his carelessness of manner, and by the respect with which his brother addressed him.

"It must be that this is one of their very fine officers, whom every one respects. Really, he is simple, but

hospitable and brave," he thought, seating himself in a timid and modest manner on the divan.

"Where is our regiment stationed, then?" called out his elder brother across the tent.

"What?"

He repeated his query.

"Zeifer has been here to-day. He told me that they had removed to the fifth bastion."

"Is that true?"

"If I say so, it must be true; but the deuce only knows, anyway! He would think nothing of telling a lie. Won't you have some porter?" said the commissary officer, still from the tent.

"I will, if you please," said Kozeltzoff.

"And will you have a drink, Osip Ignatievitch?" went on the voice in the tent, apparently addressing the sleeping commissioner. "You have slept enough; it's five o'clock."

"Why do you worry me? I am not asleep," answered a shrill, languid little voice.

"Come, get up! we find it stupid without you."

And the commissary officer came out to his guests.

"Fetch some Simferopol porter!" he shouted.

A servant entered the booth, with a haughty expression of countenance, as it seemed to Volodya, and, having jostled Volodya, he drew forth the porter from beneath the bench.

The bottle of porter had already been emptied, and the conversation had proceeded in the same style for rather a long time, when the flap of the tent flew open, and out stepped a short, fresh-colored man, in a blue dressing-gown with tassels, in a cap with a red rim and a cockade. At the moment of his appearance, he was smoothing his small black mustache, and, with his gaze fixed on the rugs, he replied to the greetings of the officer by a barely perceptible movement of the shoulders.

"I will drink a small glassful too!" said he, seating himself by the table. "What is this, have you come from Petersburg, young man?" he said, turning courteously to Volodya.

"Yes, sir, I am on my way to Sevastopol."

"Did you make the application yourself?"

"Yes, sir."

"What queer tastes you have, gentlemen! I do not understand it!" continued the commissioner. "It strikes me that I should be ready just now to travel on foot to Petersburg, if I could get away. By Heavens, I am tired of this cursed life!"

"What is there about it that does not suit you?" said the elder Kozeltzoff, turning to him. "You 're the very last person to complain of life here!"

The commissioner cast a look upon him, and then turned away.

"This danger, these privations, it is impossible to get anything here," he continued, addressing Volodya. "And why you should take such a freak, gentlemen, I really cannot understand. If there were any advantages to be derived from it, but there is nothing of the sort. It would be a nice thing, now, would n't it, if you, at your age, were to be left a cripple for life!"

"Some need the money, and some serve for honor's sake!" said the elder Kozeltzoff, in a tone of vexation, joining the discussion once more.

"What 's the good of honor, when there 's nothing to eat!" said the commissioner, with a scornful laugh, turning to the commissary, who also laughed at this. "Give us something from 'Lucia'; we will listen," he said, pointing to the music-box. "I love it."

"Well, is that Vasily Mikhaïlitch a fine man?" Volodya asked his brother when they emerged, at dusk, from the shed, and pursued their way to Sevastopol.

"Not at all, but such a niggard that it is a perfect terror! And I can't bear the sight of that commissioner. I shall give him a thrashing one of these days."

CHAPTER IX

Volodya was not precisely out of sorts when, nearly at nightfall, they reached the great bridge over the bay,

but he felt a certain heaviness at his heart. All that he had heard and seen was so little in consonance with the impressions which had recently passed away: the huge, light examination hall, with its polished floor, the kind and merry voices and laughter of his comrades, the new uniform, his beloved Tzar, whom he had been accustomed to see for the last seven years, and who, when he took leave of them had called them his children, with tears in his eyes, — and everything that he had seen so little resembled his very beautiful, rainbow-hued, magnificent dreams.

"Well, here we are at last!" said the elder brother, when they arrived at the Mikhaïloff battery, and dismounted from their cart. "If they let us pass the bridge, we will go directly to the Nikolaeff barracks. You stay there until morning, and I will go to the regiment and find out where your battery is stationed, and tomorrow I will come for you."

"But why? It would be better if we both went together," said Volodya; "I will go to the bastion with you. It won't make any difference; I shall have to get used to it. If you go, then I can too."

"Better not go."

"No, if you please; I shall find out, at least, that...."

"My advice is, not to go; but as you choose."....

The sky was clear and dark; the stars, and the incessantly moving fires of the bombs and discharges, gleamed brilliantly through the gloom. The large white building of the battery and the beginning of the bridge stood out in the darkness. Literally, every second several discharges of artillery and explosions, following each other in quick succession or occurring simultaneously, shook the air with increasing thunder and distinctness. Through this roar, and as though playing an accompaniment, the melancholy dash of the waves was audible. A faint breeze was drawing in from the sea, and the air was heavy with moisture. The brothers stepped upon the bridge. A soldier struck his gun awkwardly against his arm, and shouted: —

"Who goes there?"

"A soldier."

"The orders are not to let any one pass!"

"What of that! We have business! We must pass!"

"Ask the officer."

The officer, who was drowsing as he sat on an anchor, rose up and gave the order to let them pass.

"You can go that way, but not this. Where are you driving to, all in a heap!" he cried to the transport wagons, piled high with gabions, which had clustered about the entrance.

As they descended to the first pontoon, the brothers encountered soldiers who were coming thence, and talking loudly.

"If he has received his ammunition money, then he has squared his accounts in full .... that 's what it is!"

"Eh, comrades!" said another voice, "when you get over on the Syevernaya[1] you will see the world, by Heavens! The air is entirely different."

"You may say more!" said the first speaker. "A cursed shell flew in there the other day, and it tore the legs off of two sailors, so that ...."

The brothers traversed the first pontoon, while waiting for the wagon, and halted on the second, which was already flooded with water in parts. The breeze, which had seemed weak inland, was very powerful here, and came in gusts; the bridge swayed to and fro, and the waves, beating noisily against the beams, and tearing at the cables and anchors, flooded the planks. At the right the gloomily hostile sea roared and darkled, as it lay separated by an interminable level black line from the starry horizon, which was light gray, in its gleam; lights flashed afar on the enemy's fleet; on the left towered the black masts of one of our vessels, and the waves could be heard as they beat against her hull; a steamer was visible, as it moved noisily and swiftly from the Syevernaya.

The flash of a bomb, as it burst near it, illuminated for a moment the lofty heaps of gabions on the deck, two men who were standing on it, and the white foam

[1] The *northern* suburb.

and the spurts of greenish waves, as the steamer plowed through them. On the edge of the bridge, with his legs dangling in the water, sat a man in his shirt-sleeves, who was repairing something connected with the pontoon. In front, over Sevastopol, floated the same fires, and the terrible sounds grew louder and louder. A wave rolled in from the sea, flowed over the right side of the bridge, and wet Volodya's feet; two soldiers passed them, dragging their feet through the water. Something suddenly burst with a crash and lighted up the bridge ahead of them, the wagon driving over it, and a man on horseback, and the splinters fell into the waves with a hiss, and sent up the water in splashes.

"Ah, Mikhaïlo Semyonitch!" said the rider, stopping, reining in his horse in front of the elder Kozeltzoff, "have you fully recovered already?"

"As you see. Whither is God taking you?"

"To the Syevernaya, for cartridges; I am on my way to the adjutant of the regiment .... we expect an assault to-morrow, at any hour."

"And where is Martzoff?"

"He lost a leg yesterday; he was in the town, asleep in his room. .... Is it possible that you know him?"

"The regiment is in the fifth bastion, is n't it?"

"Yes; it has taken the place of the M—— regiment. Go to the field-hospital; some of our men are there, and they will show you the way."

"Well, and are my quarters on the Morskaya still intact?"

"Why, my good fellow, they were smashed to bits long ago by the bombs. You will not recognize Sevastopol now; there 's not a single woman there now, nor any public houses nor music; the last establishment took its departure yesterday. It has become horribly dismal there now. .... Farewell!"

And the officer rode on his way at a trot.

All at once, Volodya became terribly frightened; it seemed to him as though a cannon-ball or a splinter of bomb would fly in their direction, and strike him directly

on the head. This damp darkness, all these sounds, especially the angry splashing of the waves, seemed to be saying to him that he ought not to go any farther, that nothing good awaited him yonder, that he would never again set foot on the ground upon this side of the bay, that he must turn about at once, and flee somewhere or other, as far as possible from this terrible haunt of death. "But perhaps it is too late now, everything is settled," thought he, trembling partly at this thought and partly because the water had soaked through his boots and wet his feet.

Volodya heaved a deep sigh, and went a little apart from his brother.

"Lord, will they kill me — me in particular? Lord, have mercy on me!" said he, in a whisper, and he crossed himself.

"Come, Volodya, let us go on!" said the elder brother, when their little cart had driven upon the bridge. "Did you see that bomb?"

On the bridge, the brothers met wagons filled with the wounded, with gabions, and one loaded with furniture, which was driven by a woman. On the farther side no one detained them.

Clinging instinctively to the walls of the Nikolaeff battery, the brothers listened in silence to the noise of the bombs, exploding overhead, and to the roar of the fragments, showering down upon their heads, and came to that spot in the battery where the image was. There they learned that the fifth light battery, to which Volodya had been assigned, was stationed on the Korabelnaya, and they decided that he should go, in spite of the danger, and pass the night with the elder in the fifth bastion, and that he should from there join his battery the next day. They turned into the corridor, stepping over the legs of the sleeping soldiers, who were lying all along the walls of the battery, and at last they arrived at the field-hospital.

CHAPTER X

As they entered the first room, surrounded with cots on which lay the wounded, and permeated with the frightful and disgusting hospital odor, they met two Sisters of Mercy, who were coming to meet them.

One woman of fifty, with black eyes, and a stern expression of countenance, was carrying bandages and lint, and was giving strict orders to a young fellow, an assistant surgeon, who was following her; the other, a very pretty girl of twenty, with a pale and delicate little fair face, gazed in a peculiarly amiable and helpless way from beneath her white cap, held her hands in the pockets of her apron, as she walked beside the elder woman, and seemed to be afraid to quit her side.

Kozeltzoff addressed to them the question whether they knew where Martzoff was — the man whose leg had been torn off on the day before.

"He belonged to the P—— regiment, did he not?" inquired the elder. "Is he a relative of yours?"

"No, a comrade."

"Show them the way," said she, in French, to the young sister. "Here, this way," and she approached a wounded man, in company with the assistant.

"Come along; what are you staring at?" said Kozeltzoff to Volodya, who, with uplifted eyebrows and somewhat suffering expression of countenance, could not tear himself away, but continued to stare at the wounded. "Come, let us go."

Volodya went off with his brother, still continuing to gaze about him, however, and repeating unconsciously: —

"Ah, my God! Ah, my God!"

"He has probably not been here long?" inquired the sister of Kozeltzoff, pointing at Volodya, who, groaning and sighing, followed them through the corridor.

"He has but just arrived."

The pretty little sister glanced at Volodya, and suddenly burst out crying. "My God! my God! when will there be an end to all this?" she said, with the

accents of despair. They entered the officers' ward. Martzoff was lying on his back, with his muscular arms, bare to the elbow, thrown over his head, and with the expression on his yellow face of a man who is clenching his teeth in order to keep from shrieking with pain. His whole leg, in its stocking, was thrust outside the coverlet, and it could be seen how he was twitching his toes convulsively inside it.

"Well, how goes it, how do you feel?" asked the sister, raising his partly bald head with her slender, delicate fingers, on one of which Volodya noticed a gold ring, and arranging his pillow. "Here are some of your comrades come to inquire after you."

"Badly, of course," he answered angrily. "Let me alone! it 's all right," — the toes in his stocking moved more rapidly than ever. "How do you do? What is your name? Excuse me," he said, turning to Kozeltzoff..... "Ah, yes, I beg your pardon! one forgets everything here," he said, when the latter had mentioned his name. "You and I lived together," he added, without the slightest expression of pleasure, glancing interrogatively at Volodya.

"This is my brother, who has just arrived from Petersburg to-day."

"Hm! and here am I who have finished my service," he said, with a frown. "Ah, how painful it is!.... The best thing would be a speedy end."

He drew up his leg, and covered his face with his hands, continuing to move his toes with redoubled swiftness.

"You must leave him," said the sister, in a whisper, while the tears stood in her eyes; "he is in a very bad state."

The brothers had already decided in the Syevernaya (northern suburb) to go to the fifth bastion; but, on emerging from the Nikolaeff battery, they seemed to have come to a tacit understanding not to subject themselves to unnecessary danger, and, without discussing the subject, they determined to go their ways separately.

"Only, how are you to find your way, Volodya?" said

the elder. "However, Nikolaeff will conduct you to the Korabelnaya, and I will go my way alone, and will be with you to-morrow."

Nothing more was said at this last leave-taking between the brothers.

CHAPTER XI

The thunder of the cannon continued with the same power as before, but Yekaterinskaya Street, along which Volodya walked, followed by the taciturn Nikolaeff, was quiet and deserted. All that he could see through the thick darkness was the wide street, with the white walls of large houses, battered in many places, and the stone sidewalk beneath his feet; now and then, he met soldiers and officers. As he passed along the left side of the street, near the Admiralty building, he perceived, by the light of a bright fire burning behind the wall, the acacias planted along the sidewalk, with green guards beneath, and the wretchedly dusty leaves of these acacias.

He could plainly hear his own steps and those of Nikolaeff, who followed him, breathing heavily. He thought of nothing; the pretty little Sister of Mercy, Martzoff's leg with the toes twitching in its stocking, the bombs, the darkness, the divers pictures of death, floated hazily through his mind. All his young and sensitive soul shrank together, and ached by his consciousness of loneliness, and the indifference of every one to his fate in the midst of danger!

"They will kill me, I shall be tortured, I shall suffer, and no one will weep." And all this, instead of the hero's life, filled with energy and sympathy, of which he had cherished such glorious dreams. The bombs burst and shrieked nearer and ever nearer. Nikolaeff sighed more frequently, without breaking the silence. As he crossed the bridge leading to the Korabelnaya, he saw something fly screaming into the bay, not far from him, which lighted up the lilac waves for an in-

stant with a crimson glow, then disappeared, and then rose thence in a cloud of foam.

"See there, it was not put out!" said Nikolaeff, hoarsely.

"Yes," answered Volodya, involuntarily, and quite unexpectedly to himself, in a thin, piping voice.

They encountered litters with wounded men, then more regimental transports with gabions; they met a regiment on Korabelnaya Street; men on horseback passed them. One of them was an officer, with his Cossack. He was riding at a trot, but, on catching sight of Volodya, he reined in his horse near him, looked into his face, turned, and rode on, giving the horse a blow of his whip.

"Alone, alone; it is nothing to any one whether I am in existence or not," thought the lad, and he felt seriously inclined to cry.

After ascending the hill, past a high white wall, he entered a street of small ruined houses, incessantly illuminated by bombs. A drunken and disheveled woman, who was coming out of a small door in company with a sailor, ran against him.

"If he were only a fine man," she grumbled, — "pardon, your honor the officer."

The poor boy's heart sank lower and lower, and more and more frequently flashed the lightnings against the dark horizon, and the bombs screamed and burst about him with ever increasing frequency. Nikolaeff sighed, and all at once he began to speak, in what seemed to Volodya a frightened and constrained tone.

"What haste you made to get here from home. It was nothing but traveling. A pretty place to be in a hurry to get to!"

"That 's nothing; if my brother were only well again," replied Volodya, in hope that he might banish by conversation the frightful feeling that was taking possession of him.

"Well, what sort of health is it when he is thoroughly ill! Those who are really well had better stay in the hospital at such a time. A vast deal of joy there is

about it, is n't there? You will have a leg or an arm torn off, and that 's all you will get! It 's not far removed from a downright sin! And here in the town it 's not at all like the bastion, and that is a perfect terror. You go and say your prayers the whole way. Eh, you beast, there you go whizzing past!" he added, directing his attention to the sound of a splinter of shell whizzing by near them. "Now, here," Nikolaeff went on, "I was ordered to show your honor the way. My business, of course, is to do as I am bid; but the cart has been abandoned to some wretch of a soldier, and the bundle is undone..... Go on and on; but if any of the property disappears, Nikolaeff will have to answer for it."

After proceeding a few steps farther, they came out on a square. Nikolaeff held his peace, but sighed.

"Yonder is your artillery, your honor!" he suddenly said. "Ask the sentinel; he will show you."

And Volodya, after he had taken a few steps more, ceased to hear the sound of Nikolaeff's sighs behind him.

All at once he felt himself entirely and finally alone. This consciousness of solitude in danger before death, as it seemed to him, lay upon his heart like a terribly cold and heavy stone.

He halted in the middle of the square, glanced about him, to see whether he could catch sight of any one, grasped his head, and uttered his thought aloud in his terror: "Lord! Can it be that I am a coward, a vile, disgusting, worthless coward..... can it be that I so lately dreamed of dying with joy for my fatherland, my Tzar? No, I am an unfortunate, wretched being!" And Volodya, with a genuine sentiment of despair and disenchantment with himself, inquired of the sentinel for the house of the commander of the battery, and set out in the direction indicated.

CHAPTER XII

The residence of the commander of the battery, which the sentinel had pointed out to him, was a small, two-story house, with an entrance on the courtyard. In one of the windows, which was pasted over with paper, burned the feeble flame of a candle. A servant was seated on the porch, smoking his pipe; he went in and announced Volodya to the commander, and then led him in. In the room, between the two windows, and beneath a shattered mirror, stood a table, heaped with official documents, several chairs, and an iron bedstead with a clean pallet, and a small bed-rug by its side.

Near the door stood a handsome man, with a large mustache, — a sergeant, in saber and cloak, on the latter of which hung a cross and a Hungarian medal. Back and forth in the middle of the room paced a short staff-officer of forty, with a swollen cheek bound up, and dressed in a thin old overcoat.

"I have the honor to report myself, Ensign Kozeltzoff, 2d, ordered to the fifth light battery," said Volodya, uttering the phrase which he had learned by heart, as he entered the room.

The commander of the battery responded dryly to his greeting, and, without offering his hand, invited him to be seated.

Volodya dropped timidly into a chair, beside the writing-table, and began to twist in his fingers the scissors which his hand happened to light upon. The commander of the battery put his hands behind his back, and, dropping his head, pursued his walk up and down the room, in silence, only bestowing an occasional glance at the hands which were twirling the scissors, with the aspect of a man who is trying to recall something.

The battery commander was a rather stout man, with a large bald spot on the crown of his head, a thick mustache, which drooped straight down and concealed his mouth, and pleasant brown eyes. His hands were handsome, clean, and plump, his feet small and well

turned, and they stepped out in a confident and rather dandified manner, proving that the commander was not a timid man.

"Yes," he said, coming to a halt in front of the sergeant; "to-morrow an extra measure must be added to the pair of our horses who are fed from boxes, because they are getting thin. What do you think?"

"Of course, it is possible to do so, your excellency! Oats are very cheap just now," replied the sergeant, twitching his fingers, which he held on the seams of his trousers, but which evidently liked to assist by gestures in the conversation. "Our forage-master, Frantchuk, sent me a note yesterday, from the transports, your excellency, saying that we should certainly be obliged to purchase oats there; they say they are cheap. Therefore, what are your orders?"

"Very well, you have money." And the commander resumed his tramp through the room. "And where are your things?" he suddenly inquired of Volodya, as he paused in front of him.

Poor Volodya was so overwhelmed by the thought that he was a coward, that he espied scorn for himself in every glance, in every word, as though they had been addressed to a pitiable poltroon. It seemed to him that the commander of the battery had already divined his secret, and was making sport of him. He answered, with embarrassment, that his effects were on the Grafskaya, and that his brother had promised to send them to him on the morrow.

But the lieutenant-colonel did not hear him out, and, turning to the sergeant, he inquired:—

"Where are we to put the ensign?"

"The ensign, sir?" said the sergeant, throwing Volodya into still greater confusion by the fleeting glance which he cast upon him, and which seemed to say, "What sort of an ensign is this?"—"He can be quartered down-stairs, with the staff-captain, your excellency," he continued, after a little reflection. "The captain is at the bastion just now, and his cot is empty."

"Will not that suit you, temporarily?" said the com-

mander. "I think you must be tired, but we will lodge you better to-morrow."

Volodya rose and bowed.

"Will you not have some tea?" said the commander, when he had already reached the door. "The samovar can be brought in."

Volodya saluted and left the room. The lieutenant-colonel's servant conducted him down-stairs, and led him into a bare, dirty chamber, in which various sorts of rubbish were lying about, and where there was an iron bedstead without either sheets or coverlet. A man in a red shirt was fast asleep on the bed, covered over with a thick cloak.

Volodya took him for a soldier.

"Piotr Nikolaïtch!" said the servant, touching the sleeper on the shoulder. "The ensign is to sleep here. — This is our yunker," he added, turning to the ensign.

"Ah, don't trouble him, please," said Volodya; but the yunker, a tall, stout young man, with a handsome but very stupid face, rose from the bed, threw on his cloak, and, evidently not having had a good sleep, left the room.

"No matter; I'll lie down in the yard," he muttered.

CHAPTER XIII

Left alone with his own thoughts, Volodya's first sensation was a fear of the incoherent, forlorn state of his own soul. He wanted to go to sleep, and forget all his surroundings, and himself most of all. He extinguished the candle, lay down on the bed, and, taking off his overcoat, he wrapped his head up in it, in order to relieve his terror of the darkness, with which he had been afflicted since his childhood. But all at once the thought occurred to him that a bomb might come and crush in the roof and kill him. He began to listen attentively; directly overhead, he heard the footsteps of the battery commander.

"Anyway, if it does come," he thought, "it will kill

any one who is up-stairs first, and then me; at all events, I shall not be the only one."

This thought calmed him somewhat.

"Well, and what if Sevastopol should be taken unexpectedly, in the night, and the French make their way hither? What am I to defend myself with?"

He rose once more, and began to pace the room. His terror of the actual danger outweighed his secret fear of the darkness. There was nothing heavy in the room except the samovar and a saddle. "I am a scoundrel, a coward, a miserable coward!" the thought suddenly occurred to him, and again he experienced that oppressive sensation of scorn, and even of disgust, for himself. Again he threw himself on the bed, and tried not to think.

Then the impressions of the day involuntarily penetrated his imagination, in consequence of the unceasing sounds, which made the glass in the solitary window rattle, and again the thought of danger recurred to him: now he saw visions of wounded men and blood, now of bombs and splinters flying into the room; then of the pretty little Sister of Mercy, who was applying a bandage to him, a dying man, and weeping over him; then of his mother, accompanying him to the provincial town, and praying, amid burning tears, before the wonder-working images, and once more sleep appeared an impossibility to him.

But suddenly the thought of Almighty God, who can do all things, and who hears every supplication, came clearly into his mind. He knelt down, crossed himself, and folded his hands as he had been taught to do in his childhood, when he prayed. This gesture, all at once, brought back to him a consoling feeling, which he had long since forgotten.

"If I must die, if I must cease to exist, 'Thy will be done, Lord,'" he thought, "let it be quickly; but if bravery is needed, and the firmness which I do not possess, give them to me; deliver me from shame and disgrace, which I cannot bear, but teach me what to do in order to fulfil Thy will."

His childish, frightened, narrow soul was suddenly encouraged; it was illuminated, and caught sight of broad, brilliant, and new horizons. During the brief period while this feeling lasted, he felt and thought many other things, and soon fell asleep quietly and unconcernedly, to the sounds of the continuous roar of the bombardment and the rattling of the window-panes.

Great Lord! Thou alone hast heard, and Thou alone knowest those ardent, despairing prayers of ignorance, of troubled repentance, those petitions for the healing of the body and the enlightenment of the mind, which have ascended to Thee from that terrible precinct of death, from the general who, a moment before, was thinking of his Cross of the George on his neck, and conscious in his terror of Thy near presence, to the simple soldier writhing on the bare earth of the Nikolaeff battery, and beseeching Thee to bestow upon him there the reward, which he unconsciously anticipates, for all his sufferings.

CHAPTER XIV

The elder Kozeltzoff, meeting on the street a soldier belonging to his regiment, betook himself at once, in company with the man, to the fifth bastion.

"Keep under the wall, your honor," said the soldier.

"What for?"

"It's dangerous, your honor; there's one passing over," said the soldier, listening to the sound of a screaming cannon-ball, which struck the dry road, on the other side of the street.

Kozeltzoff, paying no heed to the soldier, walked bravely along the middle of the street.

These were the same streets, the same fires, even more frequent now, the sounds, the groans, the encounters with the wounded, and the same batteries, breastworks, and trenches, which had been there in the spring, when he was last in Sevastopol; but, for some reason, all this was now more melancholy, and, at the same time, more energetic, the apertures in the houses

were larger, there were no longer any lights in the windows, with the exception of the Kushtchin house (the hospital), not a woman was to be met with, the earlier tone of custom and freedom from care no longer rested over all, but, instead, a certain impress of heavy expectation, of weariness and earnestness.

But here is the last trench already, and here is the voice of a soldier of the P—— regiment, who has recognized the former commander of his company, and here stands the third battalion in the gloom, clinging close to the wall, and lighted up now and then, for a moment, by the discharges; and a sound is audible of subdued conversation, and the rattling of guns.

"Where is the commander of the regiment?" inquired Kozeltzoff.

"In the bomb-proofs with the sailors, your honor," replied an obliging soldier; "I will show you the way, if you like."

From trench to trench the soldier led Kozeltzoff, to a small ditch in the trench. In the ditch sat a sailor, smoking his pipe; behind him a door was visible, through whose cracks shone a light.

"Can I enter?"

"I will announce you at once," and the sailor went in through the door.

Two voices became audible on the other side of the door.

"If Prussia continues to observe neutrality," said one voice, "then Austria also...."

"What difference does Austria make," said the second, "when the Slavic lands.... well, ask him to come in."

Kozeltzoff had never been in this casemate. He was struck by its elegance. The floor was of polished wood, screens shielded the door. Two bedsteads stood against the wall; in one corner stood a large ikon of the Mother of God, in a gilt frame, and before her burned a rose-colored lamp.

On one of the beds, a naval officer, fully dressed, was sleeping. On the other, by a table on which stood two bottles of wine, partly empty, sat the men who were

talking — the new regimental commander and his adjutant.

Although Kozeltzoff was far from being a coward, and was certainly not guilty of any wrongdoing so far as his superior officers were concerned, nor toward the regimental commander, yet he felt timid before the colonel, who had been his comrade not long before, so proudly did this colonel rise and listen to him.

"It is strange," thought Kozeltzoff, as he surveyed his commander, "it is only seven weeks since he took the regiment, and how visible already is his power as regimental commander, in everything about him — his dress, his bearing, his look. Is it so very long," thought he, "since this Batrishtcheff used to carouse with us, and wore a plain white cotton shirt, without pattern, and ate by himself, never inviting any one to his quarters, his eternal meat-balls and curd-patties? But now! and that expression of cold pride in his eyes, which says to you, 'Though I am your comrade, because I am a regimental commander of the new school, yet, believe me, I am well aware that you would give half your life merely for the sake of being in my place!'"

"You have been a long time in recovering," said the colonel to Kozeltzoff, coldly, with a stare.

"I was ill, colonel! The wound has not closed well even now."

"Then there was no use in your coming," said the colonel, casting an incredulous glance at the captain's stout figure. "You are, nevertheless, in a condition to fulfil your duty?"

"Certainly I am, sir."

"Well, I 'm very glad of that, sir. You will take the ninth company from Ensign Zaitzoff — the one you had before; you will receive your orders immediately."

"I obey, sir."

"Please send me the regimental adjutant when you arrive," said the regimental commander, giving him to understand, by a slight nod, that his audience was at an end.

As he emerged from the casemate, Kozeltzoff mut-

tered something several times, and shrugged his shoulders, as though pained, embarrassed, or vexed at something, and vexed, not at the regimental commander (there was no cause for that), but at himself, and he appeared to be dissatisfied with himself and with everything about him.

CHAPTER XV

Before going to his officers, Kozeltzoff went to greet his company, and to see where it was stationed.

The breastwork of gabions, the shapes of the trenches, the cannons which he passed, even the fragments of shot, bombs, over which he stumbled in his path — all, incessantly illuminated by the light of the firing, were well known to him, all had engraved themselves in vivid colors on his memory, three months before, during the two weeks which he had spent in this very bastion without once leaving it. Although there was much that was terrible in these reminiscences, a certain charm of past things was mingled with it, and he recognized the familiar places and objects with pleasure, as though the two weeks spent there had been agreeable ones. The company was stationed along the defensive wall toward the sixth bastion.

Kozeltzoff entered the long casemate, utterly unprotected at the entrance side, in which they had told him that the ninth company was stationed. There was, literally, no room to set his foot in the casemate, so filled was it, from the very entrance, with soldiers. On one side burned a crooked tallow candle, which a recumbent soldier was holding to illuminate the book which another one was spelling out slowly. Around the candle, in the reeking half-light, heads were visible, eagerly raised in strained attention to the reader. The little book in question was a primer. As Kozeltzoff entered the casemate he heard the following: —

"Pray-er after lear-ning. I thank Thee, O Crea-tor...."

"Snuff that candle!" said a voice. "That's a splendid book." "O.... my.... God...." went on the reader.

When Kozeltzoff asked for the sergeant, the reader stopped, the soldiers began to move about, coughed, and blew their noses, as they always do after enforced silence. The sergeant rose near the group about the reader, buttoning up his coat as he did so, and, stepping over and on the legs of those who had no room to withdraw them, came forward to his officer.

"How are you, brother? Do all these belong to our company?"

"I wish you health! Welcome on your return, your honor!" replied the sergeant, with a cheerful and friendly look at Kozeltzoff. "Has your honor recovered your health? Well, God be praised! It has been very dull for us without you."

It was immediately apparent that Kozeltzoff was beloved in the company.

In the depths of the casemate, voices could be heard. Their old commander, who had been wounded, Mikhaïl Semyonitch Kozeltzoff, had arrived, and so forth; some even approached, and the drummer greeted him.

"How are you, Obantchuk?" said Kozeltzoff. "Are you all right? Good day, my boys!" he said, raising his voice.

"We wish you health!" sounded through the casemate.

"How are you getting on, boys?"

"Badly, your honor. The French are getting the better of us.... Fighting from behind the fortifications is bad work, and that's all there is about it! and they won't come out into the open field."

"Perhaps luck is with me, and God will grant that they shall come out into the field, my boys!" said Kozeltzoff. "It won't be the first time that you and I have taken a hand together; we'll beat them again."

"We'll be glad to try it, your honor!" exclaimed several voices.

"And how about them.... are they really bold?"

"Frightfully bold!" said the drummer, not loudly,

but so that his words were audible, turning to another soldier, as though justifying before him the words of the commander, and persuading him that there was nothing boastful or improbable in these words.

From the soldiers, Kozeltzoff proceeded to the defensive barracks and his brother officers.

CHAPTER XVI

In the large room of the barracks there was a great number of men, — naval, artillery, and infantry officers. Some were sleeping, others were conversing, seated on the shot-chest and gun-carriages of the cannon of the fortification; others still, who formed a very numerous and noisy group behind the arch, were seated upon two felt Cossack cloaks which had been spread on the floor, and were drinking porter and playing cards.

"Ah! Kozeltzoff, Kozeltzoff! Capital! it 's a good thing that he has come! He 's a brave fellow! .... How 's your wound?" rang out from various quarters. Here also it was evident that they loved him and were rejoiced at his coming.

After shaking hands with his friends, Kozeltzoff joined the noisy group of officers engaged in playing cards. There were some of his acquaintances among them. A slender, handsome, dark-complexioned man, with a long, sharp nose and a huge mustache, which began on his cheeks, was dealing the cards with his thin, white, taper fingers, on one of which there was a heavy gold seal-ring. He was dealing straight on, and carelessly, being evidently excited by something, — and merely desirous of making a show of heedlessness. On his right, and beside him, lay a gray-haired major, supporting himself on his elbow, and playing for half a ruble with affected coolness, and settling up immediately. On his left squatted an officer with a red, perspiring face, who was laughing and jesting in a constrained way. When his cards won, he moved one hand about incessantly in his empty trousers pocket. He was play-

ing high, and evidently no longer for ready money, which displeased the handsome, dark-complexioned man. A thin and pallid officer with a bald head, and a huge nose and mouth, was walking about the room, holding a large package of bank-notes in his hand, staking ready money on the bank, and winning.

Kozeltzoff took a drink of vodka, and sat down by the players.

"Take a hand, Mikhaïl Semyonitch!" said the dealer to him; "you have brought lots of money, I suppose."

"Where should I get any money? On the contrary, I got rid of the last I had in town."

"The idea! Some one certainly must have fleeced you in Simferopol."

"I really have but very little," said Kozeltzoff, but he was evidently desirous that they should not believe him; then he unbuttoned his coat, and took the old cards in his hand.

"I don't care if I do try; there's no knowing what the devil will do! queer things do come about at times. But I must have a drink, to get up my courage."

And within a very short space of time he had drunk another glass of vodka and several of porter, and had lost his last three rubles.

A hundred and fifty rubles were written down against the little, perspiring officer.

"No, he will not bring them," said he, carelessly, drawing a fresh card.

"Please send it," said the dealer to him, pausing a moment in his occupation of laying out the cards, and glancing at him.

"Permit me to send it to-morrow," repeated the perspiring officer, rising, and moving his hand about vigorously in his empty pocket.

"Hm!" growled the dealer, and, throwing the cards angrily to the right and left, he completed the deal. "But this won't do," said he, when he had dealt the cards. "I'm going to stop. It won't do, Zakhar Ivanitch," he added; "we have been playing for ready money and not on credit."

"What, do you doubt me? That's strange, truly!"

"From whom is one to get anything?" muttered the major, who had won about eight rubles. "I have lost over twenty rubles, but when I have won — I get nothing."

"How am I to pay," said the dealer, "when there is no money on the table?"

"I won't listen to you!" shouted the major, jumping up, "I am playing with you, but not with them."

All at once the perspiring officer flew into a rage.

"I tell you that I will pay to-morrow; how dare you say such impertinent things to me?"

"I shall say what I please! This is not the way to do — that's the truth!" shouted the major.

"That will do, Feodor Feodoritch!" all chimed in, holding back the major.

But let us draw a veil over this scene. To-morrow, to-day, it may be, each one of these men will go cheerfully and proudly to meet his death, and he will die with firmness and composure; but the one consolation of life in these conditions, which terrify even the coldest imagination in the absence of all that is human, and the hopelessness of any escape from them, — the one consolation is forgetfulness, the annihilation of consciousness. At the bottom of the soul of each lies that noble spark, which makes of him a hero; but this spark wearies of burning clearly — when the fateful moment comes it flashes up into a flame, and illuminates great deeds.

CHAPTER XVII

On the following day, the bombardment proceeded with the same vigor. At eleven o'clock in the morning, Volodya Kozeltzoff was seated in a circle of battery officers, and, having already succeeded to some extent in habituating himself to them, he was surveying the new faces, taking observations, making inquiries, and telling stories.

The discreet conversation of the artillery officers,

which made some pretensions to learning, pleased him and inspired him with respect. Volodya's shy, innocent, and handsome appearance disposed the officers in his favor.

The eldest officer in the battery, the captain, a short, sandy-complexioned man, with his hair arranged in a topknot, and smooth on the temples, educated in the old traditions of the artillery, a squire of dames, and a would-be learned man, questioned Volodya as to his acquirements in artillery and new inventions, jested caressingly over his youth and his pretty little face, and treated him, in general, as a father treats a son, which was extremely agreeable to Volodya.

Sub-Lieutenant Dyadenko, a young officer, who talked with a Little Russian accent, had a tattered overcoat and disheveled hair, although he talked very loudly, and constantly seized opportunities to dispute acrimoniously over some topic, and was very abrupt in his movements, pleased Volodya, who, beneath this rough exterior, could not help detecting in him a very fine and extremely good man. Dyadenko was incessantly offering his services to Volodya, and pointing out to him that not one of the guns in Sevastopol was properly placed, according to rule.

Lieutenant Tchernovitzky, with his brows elevated on high, though he was more courteous than any of the rest, and dressed in a coat that was tolerably clean, but not new, and carefully patched, and though he displayed a gold watch-chain on a satin waistcoat, did not please Volodya. He kept inquiring what the emperor and the minister of war were doing, and related to him, with unnatural triumph, the deeds of valor which had been performed in Sevastopol, complained of the small number of true patriots, and displayed a great deal of learning, and sense, and noble feeling in general; but, for some reason, all this seemed unpleasant and unnatural to Volodya. The principal thing which he noticed was that the other officers hardly spoke to Tchernovitzky.

Yunker Vlang, whom he had waked up on the pre-

ceding evening, was also there. He said nothing, but, seated modestly in a corner, laughed when anything amusing occurred, refreshed their memories when they forgot anything, handed the vodka, and made cigarettes for all the officers. Whether it was the modest, courteous manners of Volodya, who treated him exactly as he did the officers, and did not torment him as though he were a little boy, or his agreeable personal appearance which captivated Vlanga, as the soldiers called him, declining his name, for some reason or other, in the feminine gender, at all events, he never took his big, kind eyes from the face of the new officer. He divined and anticipated all his wishes, and remained uninterruptedly in a sort of lover-like ecstasy, which, of course, the officers perceived, and made fun of.

Before dinner, the staff-captain was relieved from the bastion, and joined their company. Staff-Captain Kraut was a light-complexioned, handsome, dashing officer, with a heavy, reddish mustache, and side-whiskers; he spoke Russian capitally, but too elegantly and correctly for a Russian. In the service and in his life, he was the same as in his language; he served very well, was a capital comrade, and the most faithful of men in money matters; but simply as a man something was lacking in him, precisely because everything about him was so excellent. Like all Russian-Germans, by a strange contradiction with the ideal German-Germans, he was "praktisch" to the highest degree.

"Here he is, our hero makes his appearance!" said the captain, as Kraut, flourishing his arms and jingling his spurs, entered the room. "Which will you have, Friedrich Kristyanitch, tea or vodka?"

"I have already ordered my tea to be served," he answered, "but I may take a little drop of vodka also, for the refreshing of the soul. Very glad to make your acquaintance; I beg that you will love us, and lend us your favor," he said to Volodya, who rose and bowed to him. "Staff-Captain Kraut.... The gun-sergeant on the bastion informed me that you arrived last night."

"Much obliged for your bed; I passed the night in it."

"I hope you found it comfortable. One of the legs is broken; but no one can stand on ceremony .... in time of siege .... you must prop it up."

"Well, now, did you have a fortunate time on your watch?" asked Dyadenko.

"Yes, all right; only Skvortzoff was hit, and we mended one of the gun-carriages last night. The cheek was smashed to atoms."

He rose from his seat, and began to walk up and down; it was plain that he was wholly under the influence of that agreeable sensation which a man experiences who has escaped a danger.

"Well, Dmitri Gavrilitch," he said, tapping the captain on the knee, "how are you getting on, my dear fellow? How about your promotion? — no word yet?"

"Nothing yet."

"No, and there will be nothing," interpolated Dyadenko; "I proved that to you before."

"Why won't there?"

"Because the story was not properly written down."

"Oh, you quarrelsome fellow, you quarrelsome fellow!" said Kraut, smiling gayly; "a regular obstinate Little Russian! Now, just to provoke you, he'll turn out your lieutenant."

"No, he won't."

"Vlang! fetch me my pipe, and fill it," said he, turning to the yunker, who at once hastened up obligingly with the pipe.

Kraut made them all lively; he told about the bombardment, he inquired what had been going on in his absence, and entered into conversation with every one.

CHAPTER XVIII

"Well, how are things? Have you already got settled among us?" Kraut asked Volodya. .... "Excuse me, what is your name and patronymic? that's the

custom with us in the artillery, you know. Have you got hold of a saddle-horse?"

"No," said Volodya; "I do not know what to do. I told the captain that I had no horse, and no money, either, until I get some for forage and traveling expenses. I want to ask the battery commander for a horse in the meantime, but I am afraid that he will refuse me."

"Apollon Sergieitch, do you mean?" he produced with his lips a sound indicative of the strongest doubt, and glanced at the captain; "not likely."

"What of that? If he does refuse, there'll be no harm done," said the captain. "No horse is necessary, to tell the truth, but still one might try; I will inquire to-day."

"What! Don't you know him?" Dyadenko interpolated. "He might refuse anything else, but there is no reason for refusing this. Do you want to bet on it?" ....

"Well, of course, everybody knows already that you always contradict."

"I contradict because I know. He is niggardly about other things, but he will give the horse because it is no advantage to him to refuse."

"No advantage, indeed, when it costs him eight rubles here for oats!" said Kraut. "Is there no advantage in not keeping an extra horse?"

"Ask Skvoretz yourself, Vladimir Semyonitch!" said Vlang, returning with Kraut's pipe. "It's a capital horse."

"The one you tumbled into the ditch with, on the festival of the Forty Martyrs, in March? Hey! Vlang?" remarked the staff-captain.

"No, and why should you say that it costs eight rubles for oats," pursued Dyadenko, "when there is inquiry for it at ten and a half? Of course, he has no object in it."

"Just as though he would have nothing left! So when you get to be battery commander, you won't let any horses go into the town?"

"When I get to be battery commander, my dear fellow, my horses will get four measures of oats to eat, and I shall not accumulate an income, never fear!"

"If we live, we shall see," said the staff-captain; "and you will act just so, and so will he when he commands a battery," he added, pointing at Volodya.

"Why do you think, Friedrich Kristyanitch, that he would turn it to his profit?" broke in Tchernovitzky. "Perhaps he has property of his own; then why should he turn it to profit?"

"No, sir, I.... excuse me, captain," said Volodya, reddening up to his ears, "that strikes me as insulting."

"Oh, ho, ho! What a severe fellow he is!" said Kraut.

"That has nothing to do with it; I only think that if the money were not mine, I should not take it."

"Now, I 'll tell you something right here, young man," began the staff-captain in a more serious tone: "you are to understand that when you command a battery, if you manage things well, that 's sufficient; the commander of a battery does not meddle with provisioning the soldiers; that is the way it has been from time immemorial in the artillery. If you are a bad manager, you will have nothing left. Now, these are the expenditures in conformity with your position: for shoeing your horse, — one (he closed one finger); for the apothecary, — two (he closed another finger); for office work, — three (he shut a third); for extra horses, which cost five hundred rubles, my dear fellow, — that 's four; you must change the soldiers' collars, you will use a great deal of coal, you must keep open table for your officers. If you are a battery commander, you must live decently; you need a carriage, and a fur coat, and this thing and that thing, and a dozen more.... but what 's the use of enumerating them all!"

"But this is the principal thing, Vladimir Semyonitch," interpolated the captain, who had held his peace all this time; "imagine yourself to be a man, who, like myself, for instance, has served twenty years, first for two hundred, then for three hundred rubles pay; why

should he not be given in return for his service at least a bit of bread in his old age?"

"Eh! yes, there you have it!" spoke up the staff-captain again, "don't be in a hurry to pronounce judgment, but live on and serve your time."

Volodya was horribly ashamed and sorry for having spoken so thoughtlessly, and he muttered something and continued to listen in silence, when Dyadenko undertook, with the greatest zeal, to dispute it and to prove the contrary.

The dispute was interrupted by the arrival of the colonel's orderly, who summoned them to dinner.

"Tell Apollon Sergieitch that he must give us some wine to-day," said Tchernovitzky, to the captain, as he buttoned up his uniform. — "Why is he so stingy with it? He will be killed, and no one will get the good of it."

"Tell him yourself."

"Not a bit of it. You are my superior officer. Rank must be regarded in all things."

CHAPTER XIX

The table had been moved out from the wall, and spread with a soiled table-cloth, in the same room in which Volodya had presented himself to the colonel on the preceding evening. The battery commander now offered him his hand, and questioned him about Petersburg and his journey.

"Well, gentlemen, I beg the favor of a glass with any of you who drink vodka. The ensigns do not drink," he added, with a smile.

On the whole, the battery commander did not appear nearly so stern to-day as he had on the preceding evening; on the contrary, he had the appearance of a kindly, hospitable host, and an elder comrade among the officers. But, in spite of this, all the officers, from the old captain down to Ensign Dyadenko, by their very manner

of speaking, and looking the commander straight in the eye, as they approached, one after the other, to drink their vodka, exhibited great respect for him.

The dinner consisted of a large wooden bowl of cabbage-soup, in which floated fat chunks of beef, and a huge quantity of pepper and laurel-leaves with mustard, and Pølish meat-balls in a cabbage leaf, and turnover patties of chopped meat and dough, with butter which was not quite fresh. There were no napkins, the spoons were of pewter and wood, there were only two glasses, and on the table stood a decanter of water with a broken neck; but the dinner was not dull, the conversation never flagged.

At first, their talk turned on the battle of Inkerman, in which the battery had taken part, as to the causes of failure on which occasion each one gave his own impressions and ideas, and held his tongue as soon as the battery commander himself began to speak; then the conversation naturally changed to the insufficiency of caliber of the light guns, and the new light-weight ordnance, in which connection Volodya had an opportunity to display his knowledge of artillery.

But their talk did not dwell upon the present terrible position of Sevastopol, as though each of them had meditated too much on that subject to allude to it again. In the same way, to Volodya's great amazement and disappointment, not a word was said about the duties of the service which he was to fulfil, just as though he had come to Sevastopol merely for the purpose of telling about the new light-weight ordnance and dining with the commander of the battery.

While they were at dinner, a bomb fell not far from the house in which they were seated. The walls and the floor trembled, as though in an earthquake, and the window was obscured with the smoke of the powder.

"You did not see anything of this sort in Petersburg, I fancy; but these surprises often take place here," said the battery commander.

"Look out, Vlang, and see where it burst."

Vlang looked, and reported that it had burst on the

square, and then nothing more was said about the bomb.

Just before the end of the dinner, an old man, the clerk of the battery, entered the room, with three sealed envelopes, and handed them to the commander.

"This is very important; a messenger has this moment brought these from the chief of the artillery."

All the officers gazed, with impatient curiosity, at the commander's practised fingers as they broke the seal of the envelope and drew forth the *very important* paper. "What can it be?" each one asked himself.

It might be that they were to march out of Sevastopol for a rest, it might be an order for the whole battery to betake themselves to the bastions.

"Again!" said the commander, flinging the paper angrily on the table.

"What's it about, Apollon Sergieitch?" inquired the eldest officer.

"An officer and crew are required for a mortar battery over yonder, and I have only four officers, and there is not a full gun-crew in the line," growled the commander, "and here more are demanded of me. But some one must go, gentlemen," he said, after a brief pause; "the order requires him to be at the barrier at seven o'clock. .... Send the sergeant! Who is to go, gentlemen? decide," he repeated.

"Well, here's one who has never been yet," said Tchernovitzky, pointing to Volodya. The commander of the battery made no reply.

"Yes, I should like to go," said Volodya, as he felt the cold sweat start out on his back and neck.

"No; why should you? There's no occasion!" broke in the captain. "Of course, no one will refuse, but neither is it proper to ask any one; but if Apollon Sergieitch will permit us, we will draw lots, as we did once before."

All agreed to this. Kraut cut some paper into bits, rolled them up, and dropped them into a cap. The captain jested, and even plucked up the audacity, on this occasion, to ask the colonel for wine, to keep up

their courage, he said. Dyadenko sat in gloomy silence, Volodya smiled at something or other, Tchernovitzky declared that it would infallibly fall to him, Kraut was perfectly composed.

Volodya was allowed to draw first; he took one slip, which was rather long, but it immediately occurred to him to change it; he took another, which was smaller and thinner, unfolded it, and read on it, "Go."

"It has fallen to me," he said, with a sigh.

"Well, God be with you. You will get your baptism of fire at once," said the commander of the battery, gazing at the perturbed countenance of the ensign with a kindly smile; "but you must get there as speedily as possible. And, to make it more cheerful for you, Vlang shall go with you as gun-sergeant."

CHAPTER XX

Vlang was exceedingly well pleased with the duty assigned to him, and ran hastily to make his preparations, and, when he was dressed, he went to the assistance of Volodya, and tried to persuade the latter to take his cot and fur coat with him, and some old "Annals of the Fatherland," and a spirit-lamp coffee-pot, and other useless things. The captain advised Volodya to read up his "Manual,"[1] first, about mortar-firing, and immediately to copy the tables out of it.

Volodya set about this at once, and, to his amazement and delight, he perceived that, though he was still somewhat troubled with a sensation of fear of danger, and still more lest he should turn out a coward, yet it was far from being to that degree in which it had affected him on the preceding evening. The reason for this lay partly in the daylight and in active occupation, and partly, — principally, also, — in the fact that fear, like any powerful emotion, cannot long continue with the same intensity. In a word, he had already succeeded in recovering from his terror.

[1] "Manual for Artillery Officers," by Bezak.

At seven o'clock, just as the sun had begun to hide itself behind the Nikolaeff barracks, the sergeant came to him, and announced that the men were ready and waiting for him.

"I have given the list to Vlang*a*. You will please to ask him for it, your honor!" said he.

Twenty artillerymen, with side-arms, but without loading-tools, were standing at the corner of the house. Volodya and the yunker stepped up to them.

"Shall I make them a little speech, or shall I simply say, 'Good day, boys!' or shall I say nothing at all?" thought he. "And why should I not say, 'Good day, boys!' Why, I ought to say that much!" And he shouted boldly, in his ringing voice:—

"Good day, boys!"

The soldiers responded cheerfully; the fresh, young voice sounded pleasant in the ears of all. Volodya marched vigorously on in front of the soldiers, and, although his heart beat as if he had run several versts at the top of his speed, his step was light and his countenance cheerful.

On arriving at the Malakoff mound, and climbing the slope, he perceived that Vlang, who had not lagged a single pace behind him, and who had appeared such a valiant fellow at home in the house, kept constantly swerving to one side, and ducking his head, as though all the cannon-balls and bombs, which whizzed by very frequently in that locality, were flying straight at him. Some of the soldiers did the same, and the faces of the majority of them betrayed, if not fear, at least anxiety. This circumstance put the finishing touch to Volodya's composure, and encouraged him.

"So here I am also on the Malakoff mound, which I imagined to be a thousand times more terrible! And I can walk along without ducking my head before the bombs, and am far less terrified than the rest! So I am not a coward, after all!" he thought with delight, and even with a somewhat enthusiastic self-sufficiency.

But this feeling was soon shaken by a spectacle upon which he stumbled in the twilight, on the Korniloff bat-

tery, in his search for the commander of the bastion. Four sailors standing near the breastworks were holding the bloody body of a man, without shoes or coat, by its arms and legs, and getting into swing in an effort to fling it over the ramparts.

(On the second day of the bombardment, it had been found impossible, in some localities, to carry off the corpses from the bastions, and so they were flung into the ditch, in order that they might not impede action in the batteries.)

Volodya stood petrified for a moment, as he saw the corpse waver on the summit of the breastworks, and then roll down into the ditch; but, luckily for him, the commander of the bastion met him there, communicated his orders, and furnished him with a guide to the battery and to the bomb-proofs designated for his service. We will not enumerate the remaining dangers and disenchantments which our hero underwent that evening: how, instead of the firing, such as he had seen on the Volkoff field, according to the rules of accuracy and precision, which he had expected to find here, he found two cracked mortars, one of which had been crushed by a cannon-ball in the muzzle, while the other stood upon the splinters of a ruined platform; how he could not obtain any workmen until the following morning in order to repair the platform; how not a single charge was of the weight prescribed in the "Manual"; how two soldiers of his command were wounded, and how he was twenty times within a hair's-breadth of death.

Fortunately there had been assigned for his assistant a gun-captain of gigantic size, a sailor, who had served on the mortars since the beginning of the siege, and who convinced him of the practicability of using them, conducted him all over the bastion, with a lantern, during the night, exactly as though it had been his own kitchen-garden, and promised to put everything in proper shape on the morrow.

The bomb-proof to which his guide conducted him was excavated in the rocky soil, and consisted of a long hole, two cubic fathoms in extent, covered with oaken

planks an arshin in thickness. Here he took up his post, with all his soldiers. Vlang was the first, when he caught sight of the little door, twenty-eight inches high, of the bomb-proof, to rush headlong into it, in front of them all, and, after nearly cracking his skull on the stone floor, he huddled down in a corner, from which he did not again emerge.

But Volodya, when all the soldiers had placed themselves along the wall on the floor, and some had lighted their pipes, set up his bed in one corner, lighted a candle, and lay upon his cot, smoking a cigarette.

Shots were incessantly heard, over the bomb-proof, but they were not very loud, with the exception of those from one cannon, which stood close by and shook the bomb-proof with its thunder. In the bomb-proof itself all was still; the soldiers, who were a little shy, as yet, of the new officer, only exchanged a few words, now and then, as they requested each other to move out of the way or to furnish a light for a pipe. A rat scratched somewhere among the stones, or Vlang, who had not yet recovered himself, and who still gazed wildly about him, uttered a sudden vigorous sigh.

Volodya, as he lay on his bed, in his quiet corner, crowded with men, and illuminated only by a single candle, experienced that sensation of well-being which he had known as a child, when, in the course of a game of hide-and-seek, he used to crawl into a cupboard or under his mother's skirts, and listen, not daring to draw his breath, afraid of the dark, and yet conscious of enjoying himself. He felt a little oppressed, but cheerful.

CHAPTER XXI

After the lapse of about ten minutes, the soldiers began to grow bolder and to converse together. The most important personages among them — the two gun-sergeants — placed themselves nearest the officer's light and bed: one was old and gray-haired, with every possible medal and cross except the George; the other

was young, a militia-man, who smoked cigarettes, which he was rolling. The drummer, as usual, assumed the duty of waiting on the officer. The bombardiers and cavalrymen sat next, and then farther away, in the shadow of the entrance, the *underlings* took up their post. They too began to talk among themselves. It was caused by the hasty entrance of a man into the bomb-proof.

"How now, brother! could n't you stay in the street? Don't the girls sing merrily?" said a voice.

"They sing such marvelous songs as were never heard in the village," said the man who had fled into the bomb-proof, with a laugh.

"But Vasin does not love bombs — ah, no, he does not love them!" said one from the aristocratic corner.

"The idea! It 's quite another matter when it 's necessary," drawled the voice of Vasin, who made all the others keep silent when he spoke; "since the 24th, the firing has been going on desperately; and what is there wrong about it? You 'll get killed for nothing, and your superiors won't so much as say 'Thank you!' for it."

At these words of Vasin, all burst into a laugh.

"There 's Melnikoft, that fellow who will sit outside," said some one.

"Well, send him here, that Melnikoff," added the old gunner; "they will kill him, for a fact, and that to no purpose."

"Who is this Melnikoff?" asked Volodya.

"Why, your honor, he 's a stupid young soldier of ours. He does n't seem to be afraid of anything, and now he keeps walking about outside. Please to take a look at him; he looks like a bear."

"He knows a spell," said the slow voice of Vasin, from the corner.

Melnikoff entered the bomb-proof. He was fat (which is extremely rare among soldiers), and a sandy-complexioned, handsome man, with a huge, bulging forehead and prominent, light blue eyes.

"Are you afraid of the bombs?" Volodya asked him.

"What is there about the bombs to be afraid of!" replied Melnikoff, shrugging his shoulders and scratching his head, "I know that I shall not be killed by a bomb."

"So you would like to go on living here?"

"Why, of course I would. It's jolly here!" he said, with a sudden outburst of laughter.

"Oh, then you must be detailed for the sortie! I'll tell the general so, if you like," said Volodya, although he was not acquainted with a single general there.

"Why should n't I like? I do!"

And Melnikoff disappeared behind the others.

"Let's have a game of noski,[1] children! Who has cards?" rang out his brisk voice.

And, in fact, it was not long before a game was started in the back corner, and blows on the nose, laughter, and calling of trumps were heard.

Volodya drank some tea from the samovar, which the drummer served for him, treated the gunners, jested, chatted with them, being desirous of winning popularity, and felt very well content with the respect which was shown him. The soldiers, too, perceiving that the gentleman put on no airs, began to talk together.

One declared that the siege of Sevastopol would soon come to an end, because a trustworthy man from the fleet had said that the emperor's brother Constantine was coming to our relief with the 'Merican fleet, and there would soon be an agreement that there should be no firing for two weeks, and that a rest should be allowed, and if any one did fire a shot, every discharge would have to be paid for at the rate of seventy-five kopeks each.

Vasin, who, as Volodya had already noticed, was a little fellow, with large, kindly eyes, and side-whiskers, related, amid a general silence at first, and afterward amid general laughter, how, when he had gone home on leave, they had been glad at first to see him, but afterward his father had begun to send him off to work, and the lieutenant of the foresters' corps sent his drozhky for his wife.

[1] A game in which the loser is rapped on the nose with the cards.

All this amused Volodya greatly. He not only did not experience the least fear or inconvenience from the closeness and heavy air in the bomb-proof, but he felt in a remarkably cheerful and agreeable frame of mind.

Many of the soldiers were already snoring. Vlang had also stretched himself out on the floor, and the old gun-sergeant, having spread out his overcoat, was crossing himself and muttering his prayers, preparatory to sleep, when Volodya took a fancy to step out of the bomb-proof, and see what was going on outside.

"Take your legs out of the way!" cried one soldier to another, as soon as he rose, and the legs were pressed aside to make way for him.

Vlang, who appeared to be asleep, suddenly raised his head, and seized Volodya by the skirt of his coat.

"Come, don't go! how can you!" he began, in a tearfully imploring tone. "You don't know about things yet; they are firing at us out there all the time; it is better here."

But, in spite of Vlang's entreaties, Volodya made his way out of the bomb-proof, and seated himself on the threshold, where Melnikoff was already sitting.

The air was pure and fresh, — particularly after the bomb-proof, — the night was clear and still. Through the roar of the discharges could be heard the sounds of cart-wheels, bringing gabions, and the voices of the men who were at work on the magazine. Above their heads was the lofty, starry sky, across which flashed the fiery streaks caused by the bombs; on the left, a tiny opening, twenty-eight inches in size, led to another bomb-proof, through which the feet and backs of the soldiers who lived there were visible, and through which their voices were audible; in front, the elevation produced by the powder-vault could be seen, and athwart it flitted the bent figures of men, and upon it, at the very summit, amid the bullets and the bombs which whistled past the spot incessantly, stood a tall form in a black paletot, with his hands in his pockets, and feet treading down the earth, which other men were fetching in sacks. Often a bomb would fly over, and burst close to the

cave. The soldiers engaged in bringing the earth bent over and ran aside; but the black figure never moved, went on quietly stamping down the dirt with his feet, and remained on the spot in the same attitude as before.

"Who is that black man?" inquired Volodya of Melnikoff.

"I don't know; I will go and see."

"Don't go! it is not necessary."

But Melnikoff, without heeding him, walked up to the black figure, and stood beside him for a tolerably long time, as calm and immovable as the man himself.

"That is the man who has charge of the magazine, your honor!" he said, on his return. "It has been pierced by a bomb, so the infantrymen are fetching more earth."

Now and then, a bomb seemed to fly straight at the door of the bomb-proof. On such occasions, Volodya shrank into the corner, and then peered forth again, gazing upward, to see whether another was not coming from some direction. Although Vlang, from the interior of the bomb-proof, repeatedly besought Volodya to come back, the latter sat on the threshold for three hours, and experienced a sort of satisfaction in thus tempting fate and in watching the flight of the bombs. By the end of the evening, he had learned from what point most of the firing proceeded, and where the shots struck.

CHAPTER XXII

On the following day, the 27th, after a ten hours' sleep, Volodya, fresh and active, stepped out on the threshold of the bomb-proof. Vlang also started to crawl out with him, but, at the first sound of a bullet, he flung himself backward through the opening of the bomb-proof, bumping his head as he did so, amid the general merriment of the soldiers, the majority of whom had also come out into the open air. Vlang, the old gun-

sergeant, and a few others were the only ones who rarely went out into the trenches; it was impossible to restrain the rest; they all scattered about in the fresh morning air, escaping from the fetid bomb-proof, and, in spite of the fact that the bombardment was as vigorous as on the preceding evening, they disposed themselves around the door, and some even on the breastworks. Melnikoff had been strolling about among the batteries since daybreak, and staring up with perfect coolness.

Near the entrance sat two old soldiers and one young, curly-haired fellow, a Jew, who had been detailed from the infantry. This soldier picked up one of the bullets which were lying about, and, having smoothed it against a stone with a potsherd, with his knife he carved from it a cross, after the style of the order of St. George; the others looked on at his work as they talked. The cross really turned out to be quite handsome.

"Now, if we stay here much longer," said one of them, "then, when peace is made, the time of service will be up for all of us."

"Nothing of the sort; I have at least four years' service yet before my time is up, and I have been in Sevastopol these five months."

"It is not counted toward the discharge, do you understand," said another.

At that moment, a cannon-ball shrieked over the heads of the speakers, and struck only a little more than two feet away from Melnikoff, who was approaching them from the trenches.

"That came near killing Melnikoff," said one man.

"I shall not be killed," said Melnikoff.

"Here 's a cross for you, for your bravery," said the young soldier who had made the cross, handing it to Melnikoff.

"No, brother, a month here counts for a year, of course.... that was the order," the conversation continued.

"Think what you please, but when peace is declared, there will be an imperial review at Arshava,[1] and if we

[1] Warsaw, *Varshava.* — Tr.

don't get our discharge, we shall be allowed to go on indefinite leave."

At that moment, a shrieking little bullet flew past the speakers' heads, and struck a stone.

"You 'll get a *full* discharge before evening .... see if you don't," said one of the soldiers.

They all laughed.

Not only before evening, but before the expiration of two hours, two of them received their full discharge, and five were wounded; but the rest jested on as before.

By morning, the two mortars had actually been brought into such a condition that it was possible to fire them. At ten o'clock, in accordance with the orders which he had received from the commander of the bastion, Volodya called out his command, and marched to the battery with it.

In the men, as soon as they proceeded to action, there was not perceptible a drop of that sentiment of fear which had been expressed on the preceding evening. Vlang alone could not control himself; he dodged and ducked just as before, and Vasin lost some of his composure, and fidgeted and squatted down incessantly.

But Volodya was in an extraordinary state of enthusiasm; the thought of danger did not even occur to him. Delight that he was fulfilling his duty, that he was not only not a coward, but even a valiant fellow, the feeling that he was in command, and the presence of twenty men, who, as he was aware, were surveying him with curiosity, made a thoroughly brave man of him. He was even vain of his valor, put on airs before his soldiers, climbed up on the banquette, and unbuttoned his overcoat expressly that he might render himself the more distinctly visible.

The commander of the bastion, who was going the rounds of his establishment, as he expressed it, at the moment, accustomed as he had become during his eight months' experience to all sorts of bravery, could not refrain from admiring this handsome lad, in the unbuttoned coat, beneath which a red shirt was visible, encircling his soft white neck, with his animated face and eyes, as

he clapped his hands and shouted: "First! second!" and ran gayly along the ramparts, in order to see where his bomb would fall.

At half-past eleven the firing ceased on both sides, and precisely at twelve o'clock the storming of the Malakoff mound, — of the second, third, and fifth bastions, began.

CHAPTER XXIII

On this side of the bay, between Inkerman and the northern suburb, on the telegraph hill, about midday, stood two naval men; one was an officer, who was engaged in observing Sevastopol through a telescope, and the other had just arrived at the signal-station with his orderly.

The sun stood high and brilliant above the bay, and played with the ships which floated upon it, and with the moving sails and boats, with a warm and cheerful glow. The light breeze hardly moved the leaves of the dry oak shrubs which stood about the signal-pole, puffed out the sails of the boats, and ruffled the waves.

Sevastopol, with her unfinished church, her columns, her line of shore, her boulevard showing green against the hill, and her elegant library building, with her tiny azure inlets, filled with masts, with the picturesque arches of her aqueducts, and the clouds of blue smoke, lighted up now and then by red flashes of flame from the firing; the same beautiful, proud, festive Sevastopol, hemmed in on one side by yellow, smoke-crowned hills, on the other by the bright blue sea, which glittered in the sun, was visible the same as ever, on the other side of the bay.

Over the horizon-line of the sea, along which floated a long wreath of black smoke from some steamer, crept long white clouds, portending a gale. Along the entire line of the fortifications, especially over the hills on the left, rose columns of thick, dense, white smoke, suddenly, abruptly, and incessantly illuminated by flashes, light-

nings, which shone even amid the light of high noon, and which constantly increased in volume, assuming divers forms, as they swept upward, and tinged the heavens with a darker hue. These puffs of smoke flashing now here, now there, took their birth on the hills, in the batteries of the enemy, in the city, and high against the sky. The sound of the discharges never ceased, but shook the air with their mingled roar.

At twelve o'clock the puffs of smoke began to occur less and less frequently, and the atmosphere quivered less with the roar.

"But the second bastion is no longer replying at all," said the officer of hussars, who sat there on horseback; "it is utterly destroyed! Horrible!"

"Yes, and the Malakoff only sends one shot to their three," replied the officer who was looking through his glass. "It enrages me to have them silent. They are firing straight on the Korniloff battery, and it is not answering at all."

"But you see that they always cease the bombardment at twelve o'clock, just as I said. It is the same to-day. Let us go and get some breakfast.... they are already waiting for us .... there 's nothing to see."

"Stop, don't interfere," said the officer with the glass, gazing at Sevastopol with peculiar eagerness.

"What 's going on there? What is it?"

"There is a movement in the trenches, and heavy columns are marching."

"Yes, that is evident," said the naval officer. "The columns are under way. We must give the signal."

"See, see! They have emerged from the trenches."

In truth, it was visible to the naked eye that dark masses were moving down the hill, across the narrow valley, from the French batteries to the bastions. In front of these specks, dark streaks were visible, which were already close to our lines. White puffs of smoke of discharges burst out at various points on the bastions, as though the firing were running along the line.

The breeze bore to them the sounds of musketry-shots, exchanged briskly, like rain beating upon the

window-pane. The black streaks moved on, nearer and nearer, into the very smoke. The sounds of firing grew louder and louder, and mingled in a lengthened, resounding roar.

The smoke, rising more and more frequently, spread rapidly along the line, flowed together in one lilac-hued cloud, which dispersed and joined again, and through which, here and there, flitted flames and black points — and all sounds were commingled in one reverberating crash.

"An assault," said the officer, with a pale face, as he handed the glass to the naval officer.

Cossacks galloped along the road, officers on horseback, the commander-in-chief in a calash, and his suite passed by. Profound emotion and expectation were visible on all countenances.

"It cannot be that they have taken it!" said the mounted officer.

"By Heavens, there's the standard! Look, look!" said the other, sighing and abandoning the glass. "The French standard on the Malakoff!"

"It cannot be!"

CHAPTER XXIV

The elder Kozeltzoff, who had succeeded in winning back his money and losing it all again that night, including even the gold pieces which were sewed into his cuffs, had fallen, just before daybreak, into a heavy, unhealthy, but profound slumber, in the fortified barracks of the fifth battalion, when the fateful cry, repeated by various voices, rang out: —

"The alarm!"

"Why are you sleeping, Mikhaïl Semyonitch! There's an assault!" a voice shouted to him.

"That is probably some school-boy," he said, opening his eyes, but putting no faith in it.

But all at once he caught sight of an officer running aimlessly from one corner to the other, with such a pale face that he understood it all. The thought that he

might be taken for a coward, who did not wish to go out to his company at a critical moment, struck him with terrible force. He ran to his corps at the top of his speed. Firing had ceased from the heavy guns; but the crash of musketry was at its height. The bullets whistled, not singly like rifle-balls, but in swarms, like a flock of birds in autumn, flying past overhead. The entire spot on which his battalion had stood the night before was veiled in smoke, and the shouts and cries of the enemy were audible. Soldiers, both wounded and unwounded, met him in throngs. After running thirty paces farther, he caught sight of his company, which was hugging the wall.

"They have captured Schwartz," said a young officer. "All is lost!"

"Nonsense!" said he, angrily, grasping his blunt little iron sword, and he began to shout:—

"Forward, boys! Hurrah!"

His voice was strong and ringing; it roused even Kozeltzoff himself. He ran forward along the traverse; fifty soldiers rushed after him, shouting as they went. From the traverse he ran out upon an open square. The bullets fell literally like hail. Two struck him,— but where, and what they did, whether they bruised or wounded him, he had not the time to decide.

In front, he could already see blue uniforms and red trousers, and could hear shouts which were not Russian; one Frenchman was standing on the breastworks, waving his cap, and shouting something. Kozeltzoff was convinced that he was about to be killed; this gave him courage.

He ran on and on. Some soldiers overtook him; other soldiers appeared from somewhere at one side, also running. The blue uniforms remained at the same distance from him, fleeing back from him to their own trenches; but beneath his feet were the dead and wounded. When he had run to the outermost ditch, everything became confused before Kozeltzoff's eyes, and he was conscious of a pain in the breast.

Half an hour later, he was lying on a stretcher, near

the Nikolaeff barracks, and knew that he was wounded, though he felt hardly any pain; all he wanted was something cooling to drink, and to be allowed to lie still in peace.

A plump little doctor, with large black side-whiskers, approached him, and unbuttoned his coat. Kozeltzoff stared over his chin at what the doctor was doing to his wound, and at the doctor's face, but he felt no pain. The doctor covered his wound with his shirt, wiped his fingers on the skirts of his coat, and, without a word or glance at the wounded man, went off to some one else.

Kozeltzoff's eyes mechanically took note of what was going on before him, and, recalling the fact that he had been in the fifth bastion, he thought, with an extraordinary feeling of self-satisfaction, that he had fulfilled his duty well, and that, for the first time in all his service, he had behaved as handsomely as it was possible for any one, and had nothing with which to reproach himself. The doctor, after bandaging the other officer's wound, pointed to Kozeltzoff, and said something to a priest, with a huge reddish beard and a cross, who was standing near by.

"What! am I dying?" Kozeltzoff asked the priest, when the latter approached him.

The priest, without making any reply, recited a prayer and handed the cross to the wounded man.

Death had no terrors for Kozeltzoff. He grasped the cross with his weak hands, pressed it to his lips, and burst into tears.

"Well, were the French repulsed?" he inquired of the priest, in firm tones.

"The victory has remained with us at every point," replied the priest, in order to comfort the wounded man, concealing from him the fact that the French standard had already been unfurled on the Malakoff mound.

"Thank God!" said the wounded man, without feeling the tears which were trickling down his cheeks.

The thought of his brother occurred to his mind for a single instant. "May God grant him the same good fortune," he said to himself.

CHAPTER XXV

But the same fate did not await Volodya. He was listening to a tale which Vasin was in the act of relating to him, when there was a cry, — "The French are coming!" The blood fled for a moment to Volodya's heart, and he felt his cheeks turn cold and pale. For one second he remained motionless; but, on glancing about him, he perceived that the soldiers were buttoning up their coats with tolerable equanimity, and crawling out, one after the other. One even, probably Melnikoff, remarked, in a jesting way: —

"Go out and offer them the bread and salt of hospitality, boys!"

Volodya, in company with Vlang, who never separated from him by so much as a step, crawled out of the bomb-proof, and ran to the battery.

There was no artillery firing whatever in progress on either side. It was not so much the sight of the soldiers' composure which aroused his courage as the pitiful and undisguised cowardice of Vlang. "Is it possible for me to be like him?" he said to himself, and he ran on gayly up to the breastworks, near which his mortars stood. It was clearly apparent to him that the French were making straight for him through an open space, and that masses of them, with their bayonets glistening in the sun, were moving in the nearest trenches.

One, a short, broad-shouldered fellow, in zouave uniform, and armed with a sword, ran on in front and leaped the ditch.

"Fire grape-shot!" shouted Volodya, hastening from the banquette; but the soldiers had already made their preparations without waiting for his orders, and the metallic sound of the grape-shot which they discharged shrieked over his head, first from one and then from the other mortar.

"First! second!" commanded Volodya, running from one mortar to the other, and utterly oblivious of danger.

On one side, and near at hand, the crash of musketry

from our men under shelter, and anxious cries, were heard.

All at once a startling cry of despair, repeated by several voices, was heard on the left: "They are surrounding us! They are surrounding us!"

Volodya looked round at this shout. Twenty Frenchmen made their appearance in the rear. One of them, a handsome man with a black beard, was in front of all; but, after running up to within ten paces of the battery, he halted, and fired straight at Volodya, and then ran toward him once more.

For a second, Volodya stood as though turned to stone, and did not believe his eyes. When he recovered himself and glanced about him, there were blue uniforms in front of him on the ramparts; two Frenchmen were even spiking a cannon not ten paces distant from him.

There was no one near him, with the exception of Melnikoff, who had been killed by a bullet beside him, and Vlang, who, with a handspike clutched in his hand, had rushed forward, with an expression of wrath on his face, and with eyes lowered.

"Follow me, Vladimir Semyonitch! Follow me!" shouted the desperate voice of Vlang, as he brandished his handspike over the French, who were pouring in from the rear. The yunker's ferocious countenance startled them. He struck the one who was in advance on the head; the others involuntarily paused, and Vlang continued to glare about him, and to shout in despairing accents: "Follow me, Vladimir Semyonitch! Why do you stand there? Run!" and ran toward the trenches in which lay our infantry, firing at the French. After leaping into the trench, he came out again to see what his adored ensign was doing. Something in an overcoat was lying prostrate where Volodya had been standing, and the whole place was filled with Frenchmen, who were firing at our men.

CHAPTER XXVI

VLANG found his battery on the second line of defense. Out of the twenty soldiers who had been in the mortar battery, only eight survived.

At eight o'clock in the evening, Vlang crossed over with the battery on a steamer loaded down with soldiers, cannon, horses, and wounded men, to the northern suburb.

There was no firing anywhere. The stars shone brilliantly in the sky, as on the preceding night; but a strong wind tossed the sea. On the first and second bastions, lightnings flashed along the earth; explosions rent the atmosphere, and illuminated strange black objects in their vicinity, and the stones which flew through the air.

Something was burning near the docks, and the red glare was reflected in the water. The bridge, covered with people, was lighted up by the fire from the Nikolaeff battery. A vast flame seemed to hang over the water, from the distant promontory of the Alexandroff battery, and illuminated the clouds of smoke beneath, as it rose above them; and the same tranquil, insolent, distant lights as on the preceding evening gleamed over the sea, from the hostile fleet.

The fresh breeze raised billows in the bay. By the red light of the conflagrations, the masts of our sunken ships, which were slowly settling deeper and deeper into the water, were visible. Not a sound of conversation was heard on deck; there was nothing but the regular swish of the parted waves, and the steam, the neighing and pawing of the horses, the words of command from the captain, and the groans of the wounded. Vlang, who had had nothing to eat all day, drew a bit of bread from his pocket, and began to chew it; but all at once he recalled Volodya, and burst into such loud weeping that the soldiers who were near him heard it.

"See how our Vlanga[1] is eating his bread and crying too," said Vasin.

[1] The feminine form, as previously referred to.

"Wonderful!" said another.

"And see, they have fired our barracks," he continued, with a sigh. "And how many of our comrades perished there; and the French got it for nothing!"

"At all events, we have got out of it alive — thank God for that!" said Vasin.

"But it's provoking, all the same!"

"What is there provoking about it? Do you suppose they are enjoying themselves there? Not exactly! You wait, our men will take it away from them again. And however many of our brethren perish, as God is holy, if the emperor commands, they will win it back. Can ours leave it to them thus? Never! There you have the bare walls; but they have destroyed all the breastworks. Even if they have planted their standard on the hill, they won't be able to make their way into the town."

"Just wait, we'll have a hearty reckoning with you yet, only give us time," he concluded, addressing himself to the French.

"Of course we will!" said another, with conviction.

Along the whole line of bastions of Sevastopol, which, for so many months, had seethed with remarkably vigorous life, which, for so many months, had seen dying heroes relieved one after another by death, and which, for so many months, had awakened the terror, the hatred, and finally the admiration of the enemy, — on the bastions of Sevastopol, there was no longer a single man. All was dead, wild, horrible, — but not silent.

Destruction was still in progress. On the earth, furrowed and strewed with the recent explosions, lay bent gun-carriages, crushing down the bodies of Russians and of the foe; heavy iron cannons silenced forever, bombs and cannon-balls hurled with horrible force into pits, and half-buried in the soil, then more corpses, pits, splinters of beams, bomb-proofs, and still more silent bodies in gray and blue coats. All these were still frequently shaken and lighted up by the crimson glow of the explosions, which continued to shake the air.

The foe perceived that something incomprehensible

was going on in that menacing Sevastopol. Those explosions and the death-like silence on the bastions made them shudder; but they dared not yet believe, being still under the influence of the calm and forcible resistance of the day, that their invincible enemy had disappeared, and they awaited motionless and in silence the end of that gloomy night.

The army of Sevastopol, like the gloomy, surging sea, quivering throughout its entire mass, wavering, plowing across the bay, on the bridge, and at the northern suburb, moved slowly through the impenetrable darkness of the night, away from the place where it had left so many of its brave brethren, from the place all steeped in its blood, from the place which it had defended for eleven months against a foe twice as powerful as itself, and which it was now ordered to abandon without a battle.

The first impression produced on every Russian by this command was inconceivably sad. The second feeling was a fear of pursuit. The men felt that they were defenseless as soon as they abandoned the places on which they were accustomed to fight, and they huddled together uneasily in the dark, at the entrance to the bridge, which was swaying about in the heavy breeze.

The infantry pressed forward, with a clash of bayonets, and a thronging of regiments, equipages, and arms; cavalry officers made their way about with orders; the inhabitants and the military servants accompanying the baggage, which was not permitted to cross, wept and entreated; while the artillery, in haste to get off, forced their way to the bay with a thunder of wheels.

In spite of the diversions created by the varied and anxious demands on their attention, the instinct of self-preservation and the desire to escape as speedily as possible from that dread place of death were present in every soul. This instinct existed also in a soldier mortally wounded, who lay among the five hundred other wounded, upon the stone pavement of the Pavloff quay, and prayed God to send death; and in the militiaman who, with his last remaining strength, pressed into

the compact throng, in order to make way for a general who rode by; and in the general in charge of the transportation, who was engaged in restraining the haste of the soldiers; and in the sailor who had become entangled in the moving battalion, and who, crushed by the surging throng, had lost his breath; and in the wounded officer who was being borne along in a litter by four soldiers, who, stopped by the crowd, had placed him on the ground by the Nikolaeff battery; and in the artilleryman who had served his gun for sixteen years, and who, at his superior's command, to him incomprehensible, to throw overboard the guns, had, with the aid of his comrades, sent them over the steep bank into the bay; and in the men of the fleet, who had just let down the gangways of the ships, and had rowed lustily away in their boats. On stepping upon the farther end of the bridge, nearly every soldier pulled off his cap and crossed himself.

But behind this instinct there was another, oppressive and far deeper, existing along with it; this was a feeling which resembled repentance, shame, and hatred. Almost every soldier, as he gazed on abandoned Sevastopol, from the northern suburb, sighed with inexpressible bitterness of heart, and menaced the foe.